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THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING TRANSITION MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON THURSDAY 9 JULY 2026.

The Committee met at 3.30 p.m.

CHAIR (Ms *Johnston*) - Welcome to today's hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition and thank you very much for your attendance today. Joining us today, we have online, Tania Rattray. Can you hear us, Tania?

Ms RATTRAY - Afternoon, everyone.

CHAIR - Afternoon, Tania. We have Dean Winter; Cassy O'Connor; myself as Chair, Kristie Johnston; Meg Webb; and we have just joining us now, Marcus Vermey.

Sean - Commissioner, could you please state your name and the capacity in which you're appearing before the Committee?

Mr CARROLL - My full name is Sean Michael Carroll, and I'm Tasmania's Racing Integrity Commissioner.

CHAIR - Thank you. Can I confirm that you've received and read the guide sent to you by the Committee Secretary?

Mr CARROLL - Yes, I have.

CHAIR - Thank you. As you'd be aware, because you've appeared here a number of times before, this hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege, allowing individuals to speak with freedom without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament. This protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing and the public and media may be present. Should you wish aspects of your evidence to be heard in private, you must make this request to the Committee at the time. I am aware that there might be sections that we will be hearing in camera later this afternoon.

Although you have appeared before and have made the statutory declaration, it has been a few months. We might get you to read the statutory declaration just again for formality's sake.

Mr SEAN MICHAEL CARROLL, TASMANIAN RACING INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Would you like to begin by making a short opening statement?

Mr CARROLL - Thank you, Chair. I must begin by reiterating that the submission I make is provided to members of the Joint Standing Committee in my capacity as the Independent Racing Integrity Commissioner for Tasmania with no allegiance to the government's policy position to ban greyhound racing. Whilst this is a case, as you know, I've

been requested by the Tasmanian government to develop a transition plan that delivers an orderly closure of greyhound racing by 30 June 2029. This transition plan is contingent on the passing of the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill. I'm on the record as to the importance of this Bill in ensuring an orderly closure that supports the wellbeing of participants and greyhounds. The work on the transition plan is progressing, however the plan cannot be finalised until such a time as the outcome of the Bill is known.

This uncertainty is impacting the participants' wellbeing and continues to cause significant upset and stress for the greyhound racing community. To support the community, Positive Solutions and Rural Alive and Well have attended various race meetings since the beginning of June and these services will continue to be deployed. Additional counselling services will also be engaged to provide more specialised assistance to participants, should this be required.

On 2 June I was requested by the former Racing minister, in consultation with stakeholders and the Greyhound Racing Transition Working Group, to develop a scheme to provide immediate support for greyhound racing industry participants who wish to exit the industry by 31 December 2026. This is known within our office as a 'voluntary exit scheme'.

The issue of compensation is one that requires considerable consultation with the greyhound racing participants. In this regard, I'm mindful that the Greyhound Racing Transition Working Group does not presently include any representatives from the greyhound racing community.

To ensure that we can consider the needs of the participants and support the best outcomes for the greyhounds, I've decided to write personally to each individual participant inviting expressions of interest for greyhound racing participants who wish to participate in a period of consultation and discuss regarding access to such a scheme. The consultation process is intended to support the development of fair, practical and evidence-based transitional arrangements to those participants who wish to voluntarily leave the greyhound industry by 31 December 2026. I will hold confidential individual meetings with each participant that has submitted an expression of interest to discuss these circumstances and transition needs. These meetings will commence during the week of 13 July in Hobart, Launceston and Devonport. The correspondence has been sent out by Australia Post to each of the 284 participants and we've provided stamp addressed return envelopes with each letter, so there's no cost to the participant.

I've also mentioned previously that a feasibility study on the impact of the government's decision to ban greyhound racing is being undertaken. This work is progressing. I'm expecting to receive the feasibility report by the end of July this year. I'll take on board any questions.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Commissioner. I might begin, if I can. In your opening statement there, you talked about the importance of the working group and you're continuing to work with them around a draft transition plan and indicated that, unfortunately, there isn't a greyhound industry participant representative on that particular working group. That's something that we've canvassed before in previous hearings and I think, maybe a few months ago, there was hope that there would be participation from the industry on that working group. Can you outline a bit what's happened since then in terms of their participation for us?

Mr CARROLL - We've had a number of conversations with Greyhounds Tasmania and Mr Gatehouse regarding their involvement. I think, as I mentioned last time, Mr Gatehouse was present during one of the meetings as an observer. We again wrote to Greyhounds Tasmania inviting them and offering - as their request was to members of the greyhound community to take part as part of the working group and that they could nominate suitable applicants for those working groups. Those people would go through the normal process of - a vetting process to make sure that they were suitable for the working group but also undertake the confidentiality clauses within that working group. They initially nominated two people to come forward on that working group and we said that they could open it up to other people within the greyhound industry. We then received correspondence to say that they had reversed their decision and decided not to nominate anyone for the working group until the Bill had been decided.

CHAIR - So, they don't intend to participate in the process at all?

Mr CARROLL - Not at all. But what I would say, in fairness to Mr Gatehouse, is that he and I are in regular discussions as to what's taking place, as has been the case - the working group publishes a communiqué for each working group meeting, we send that to Mr Gatehouse, we receive feedback. I advised him prior to the correspondence for the voluntary exit scheme going out. We need to make sure that there's no surprises at his end for his participants as to what's taking place.

CHAIR - When you meet with the working group, do you engage with Greyhounds Tasmania or representatives of it before that so that there's somewhere in the room that has awareness of what their views might be about a particular agenda item? Or is that something that happens after the meeting in terms of the communication?

Mr CARROLL - Usually after. As I said, Mr Gatehouse and I will speak about a number of issues and he's well aware that we're progressing with the drafting of the transition plan. But, as I said, their firm position has been that they won't have any involvement until the Bill's been dealt with.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Commissioner, for coming in once again to one of our hearings. In previous discussions that we've had, we've talked about the potential for a spike in breeding rates amongst racing greyhounds, particularly given the fact that the Bill hasn't passed yet and it contained restrictions on breeding. What observations are you able to share or what data can you share about the current number of pups whelped and what timeframe, perhaps the first quarter of this year, if you know that?

Mr CARROLL - Sure. What I can say is that in year ending 2024, there was 110 pups at whelp in year end. In 2025, there was 155 pups that were whelped. We saw a significant decline in the first quarter of the financial year, where there was 17 pups whelped. Bearing in mind that the decision of the Government to announce that was made on 10 August [2025].

Ms O'CONNOR - Which would capture that time period.

Mr CARROLL - No, it wouldn't. Given the gestation period is 63 days, we wouldn't expect to see any spike in that until 63 days after. What I should say was, and certainly to my knowledge, that the proposed Bill wasn't made public until, I'm going to say, November, as to when the prohibition on breeding would take place. In the second quarter, from October to

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December, we saw only 17 pups whelped again, so that wouldn't have captured that announcement being made. In the third quarter, from January to March, where we could have expected to see a spike, we saw 65 pups that were whelped. Then on the figures that I had up until June, and it does include all of June at this stage, there was 46 pups that were whelped.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, March to June: 46. So, we're all almost getting, just for the last half of this financial year, almost at the same level of pups whelped as for all of 2024?

Mr CARROLL - Almost, yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. What kind of oversight does your office have on those pups that are whelped because, and we've talked about this before again, too, there's a question mark about what happens to unnamed dogs?

Mr CARROLL - I can give you those figures as well, if you like. My office has now been keeping a record or oversight of the named greyhounds in Tasmania. In the first quarter we had 48 greyhounds that were named; in the second quarter, we had 30; in the third quarter, we had 28; and in the fourth quarter, to date, and noting I don't have all the records for June, but we had 37 that were named. Whilst we have oversight of that, that is being managed by Tasracing. As I said before, the working group that they have and in particular the team that's conducting the audits of all greyhounds in Tasmania, is doing a wonderful job and providing us significant detail that we hadn't seen before, but also improving the accountability and traceability of all greyhounds in Tasmania. Without having the Bill passed, or whether it passes or not, one of the benefits we've already seen is that through the Tasracing working group and the audit group that we've seen greater traceability of all greyhounds to date.

Ms O'CONNOR - From whelping?

Mr CARROLL - Yes - well, actually, from all greyhounds; essentially from birth to death.

CHAIR - Can I just ask on the naming: obviously 48, 30, 28, 37, they're not necessarily all the same age? They're not named at a particular point in time, so they might be -

Mr CARROLL - No. There would be carryover from certain times.

CHAIR - carryovers from previous years' whelping. Do you have like an age range in terms of when they might be - how old they might have been when they were whelped?

Mr CARROLL - No. And there's -

CHAIR - Just in terms of how to keep track of what year they were whelped in when they were named.

Mr CARROLL - No, we don't have the age of when a greyhound is named and, essentially, that can be done at any stage. So, it doesn't really provide any great level of accuracy. What it does do, though, is it, over a period of time, and if you look probably over a two-year period, you could see the number of pups whelped compared to the number of greyhounds that have been named to see which pups actually went on to have a racing career.

CHAIR - Yes. So, in terms of traceability for those unnamed greyhounds, it's really important to understand when they're whelped.

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I ask, Commissioner, Tasracing has, for the first time, as far as I know, released a draft code of practice for greyhound welfare, and it contains certain minimum standards around health, wellbeing, feeding, housing, which certainly weren't in place in this format before and Tasracing wasn't able in a previous hearing to explain what were the minimum standards for housing, for example. Were you or your office consulted on this draft code of practice?

Mr CARROLL - We were. You may be aware that one of the recommendations that we had out of certain investigations and through the greyhound code of practice was the development of a greyhound code of practice. I am aware that that code of practice had been in development for a number of years; there had been significant periods of consultation with the greyhound participants. It came to our office, I'm going to say, in March or April this year [2026] and we gave it to my independent veterinary adviser, Kate Savage, who went through that, provided feedback. My understanding is it's gone to the board, it's going out for further consultation to the greyhound community, at which time we'll probably receive the final draft copy and then assess where it sits.

Ms O'CONNOR - So, presumably, this code of practice, which is in draft form now, will align with what standards you've issued or set out? I mean, presumably, this draft code of practice will improve, for the time that the industry is in place, at least some of the circumstances for racing greyhounds?

Mr CARROLL - I think whether it's a code of practice for race horses or code of practice for greyhounds, we would look to see continual improvement of the code itself. There'll be reference to the code of practice in the animal welfare standard that my office is currently working on. You will be aware that recently for all other aspects of integrity and animal welfare that our office released eight standards on the first of this month. Given the significance of the animal welfare standard, there's still further consultation that's being undertaken regarding that, but it will make reference to both the code of practice for race horses and for greyhounds.

Ms RATTRAY - Apologies for not being down there with you. Just interested in having some understanding around what's been offered, and you just said that you didn't want to talk about the voluntary exit scheme, but can you talk about what is proposed for that without going into too much detail? I've already had some feedback that participants who received their letter want to have some idea of what they might be entering into, if you like. Is that not possible to have some detail?

Mr CARROLL - Well, initially it'll be a period of consultation as to see the expectations of the participant base to start with. I haven't, at this stage, been given any parameters to work within as to what particular figures may look like as far as that's concerned. As I said before, given the complexity of the issue, I think it's quite important there's a period of consultation that's undertaken with the participant base to see what their expectation is before I can make a determination as to where any number may head, as far as a dollar figure is concerned.

Ms RATTRAY - It's interesting, isn't it? It's almost chicken and egg: what comes first? I mean, do people put in an expression of interest thinking that it would look at the purchase of

dogs? Is it infrastructure? Is it loss of income? I mean, there must be some sort of thoughts around that, Commissioner, surely, at this stage?

Mr CARROLL - Look, there's been consideration given to various models and we hope to finalise a proposed model when the first draft of the transition plan is finalised. The reality will be that this voluntary exit scheme may have different parameters to those that are within the compensation scheme within the transition plan. This is an opportunity, and as I said before, that I am well aware, as is everyone around this table, as to the stress that this has caused certain participants.

I must say that I had been approached by a number of participants at the greyhound race meetings that had suggested was an opportunity to have those discussions about leaving the industry early and what that would look like and was there the opportunity for compensation prior to the end of the transition period in 2029. I can understand those concerns that some of those participants have. It would be negligent of me to actually determine what those parameters may look like until I have those initial discussions with those participants to see what their expectation is. I can then take those discussions I have and relay those to the working group and find the parameters from the Government as to what negotiations then can be undertaken with those participants to finalise on whatever figure may be that will deliver a voluntary exit for those individuals. Clearly, as I said, that will look different to the actual compensation scheme that will be held within the transition plan.

Ms RATTRAY - How can you take that information back to the working group when there aren't any representatives of the greyhound code on the working group? You've given a little bit of an outline to the Chair's question earlier around that: the industry is waiting for a decision before they join the working group. I'm just not sure how - I'm trying to work through how this can work when you won't have any industry people as part of the working group until there's an actual decision made by the Legislative Council and, ultimately, the Parliament about whether this moves forward or not.

Mr CARROLL - I think it's quite simple, to be fair.

Ms RATTRAY - Oh, okay. Alright. I never said I was the smartest person going around.

Mr CARROLL - You've got to look at these in isolation - as two separate issues; that you have the transition plan that is aligned to the current Bill but this is a purely voluntary exit scheme for participants that want to take part in a period of consultation for those that don't wish to continue voluntarily within the industry after 31 December this year [2026]. Those discussions and consultation will take place to see what their level of expectation is regarding that - that should they choose to take part in a voluntary exit scheme, they would surrender their licences and obviously their greyhounds would need to be rehomed appropriately, as far as qualifying for a voluntary exit scheme. But the issue of the industry shutting down or being phased out according to the Bill and the voluntary scheme, are two separate things. This is a choice that participants can have to leave the industry early and receive some form of compensation for that that sits outside the transition plan and the Bill itself.

Ms WEBB - I'll just pull up on that a little bit, I think, just to try to be really clear here. If people do have an interest in possibly a voluntary exit by the end of this year, as you've just described, and they put in an expression of interest form at this stage and have that initial discussion with you about it, is there any detriment to them in doing that?

Mr CARROLL - Not at all.

Ms WEBB - Because at any point in time they could choose not to pursue that once they understand a bit more detail down the track - what that might actually result in, in terms of their personal circumstances and compensation. What do you see playing out there? There's these initial conversations, you go back to the working group, look at what arrangements might be put in place. What would happen then to somebody who's put in an expression of interest?

Mr CARROLL - There's no obligation on any person that comes forward who wants to take part in an expression of interest, and that may be a five-minute conversation, that could be a five-hour conversation. It may just be a conversation to actually listen to all their issues, which I'm happy to do that as well. But once again, just because a person completes an expression of interest form, they're under no obligation to follow through with any voluntary -

Ms WEBB - It's not binding at this point in time?

Mr CARROLL - Not at all. In fact, I would have thought that there would have been a number of people that would have been interested at least to see what the parameters of that would be in the discussions that we have. I would think that there would be a number of people that complete an expression of interest form that don't take part in the scheme, if any at all. What I have done is listen to the participant base on the conversations that I have had to understand that there are people that are thinking about leaving the industry early and what are the opportunities for them to alleviate the level of stress and anguish that they're under.

Ms WEBB - So, essentially, this is providing above what - and the ongoing transition plan may not turn out to be. This is providing, in the immediate sense, a responsive way that people can potentially pursue exiting the industry in a supported way now.

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Due to their own personal choice and circumstance.

Mr CARROLL - And as I said, without going and naming individuals, which I wouldn't, I've had those conversations where people have said we'd like to leave the industry now.

CHAIR - Just on that, obviously this is an opportunity - it's a voluntary opportunity and I think the data that you provided in Estimates to the House of Assembly Estimates Committee showed that there's a large diversity in terms of trainers involved - some have many dogs, some only have one or none. So, this is an opportunity then for those people to explore sort of a more bespoke kind of voluntary exit scheme to exit the industry by the end of the year, given that we are talking about a lot of various circumstances. So, what you're seeking from industry participants who might be interested is an explanation of what their current circumstances are, what their needs might be ongoing post-31 December - is that the kind of information you're seeking?

Mr CARROLL - Yes. No doubt, as has been said by myself, but also for Tasracing, the greyhound industry is made up of a small number of full-time trainers; a number of trainers that have, if you like, an intermediate number of greyhounds, between three and 10, and then

hobbyists that might have one or two or three greyhounds. This is open to everyone to actually have a discussion.

We take some learnings from other jurisdictions where as we saw in New Zealand, prior to the industry shutting down there, assistance was sought from greyhound trainers that wanted to relocate to Queensland. Without breaching confidence, I've already had conversations with trainers in Tasmania that have asked about potential assistance in relocating to other jurisdictions. I'm happy to listen to those conversations. I can't say that will take place, but I can't make a determination as to what any potential compensation would look like until I have those discussions.

CHAIR - I suppose, though, the point is that it's quite a bespoke response to the individual's needs in those kind of scenarios, that there's the opportunity. There's a very big difference between having a trainer exit the industry that has many greyhounds to someone who's a hobbyist, for instance. So, this provides, potentially, the opportunity for a more bespoke response to those individual needs than a standardised transition package.

Mr CARROLL - Correct.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just talking about the New Zealand example: in a bit over two weeks' time, as you know, Commissioner, New Zealand will have ended greyhound racing. In previous evidence that you've given, and I don't want to verbal you here, but you did indicate that you were having conversations with other jurisdictions about their experiences of inquiry or transition. Have you got any information to share or learnings from how New Zealand is tracking two weeks before closure of the industry?

Mr CARROLL - Probably not too much more than I've provided before. Clearly, they've gone down a path of providing a rebate to owners and trainers to essentially keep their greyhounds until they're rehomed. That's proving considerably expensive for the New Zealand government, and it's probably not a model that I would recommend. Clearly there may be a need for individual cases as far as that's concerned, but it's not part of the rehoming model that we're looking for at the transition plan. I think there's pros and cons there for the quick transition that they've had, in that the biggest concern that I've had, and as I said from day one, was both participant and animal welfare.

I think that we've done - we've made great efforts to provide levels of support to the participant base that we've had to date, but I certainly understand their anguish and the concern that they've had. I'm also conscious that that will be drawn out until 30 June 2029 and a lot of participants will have that anguish for that entire period and some uncertainty as far as that's concerned. So, having a shorter transition period could be beneficial, but also having said that, you're condensing - and New Zealand have a lot more greyhounds than we do - the rehoming issues that you're going to have, and as I've said before, that's one of the significant concerns that I have, as to how do we rehome over 1000 greyhounds in that period of time.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, I just want to take a second to reflect that there's a lot of people who care about the welfare of greyhounds and dogs and generally who also are feeling in great stress at the moment, which is only amplified when there was uncertainty over the legislation and particularly after they saw some of the footage that went to air on the news last night. But you were talking earlier about that we have a better ability to track dogs from birth to death in Tasmania and that's a good thing. What about dogs that are trialled but not at stewards trials?

Because we've had some difficulties understanding what happens to some of those dogs at trial and we sought some data from Tasracing and they don't keep that data, we've been told.

Mr CARROLL - There are sanctioned trials and unsanctioned trials. Without the intimate knowledge of unsanctioned trials that I don't have, and whilst I don't claim to be an expert on all things greyhound racing, what I do know is that there is what's termed the 'hand slipping' of greyhounds where one person will hold a greyhound and let it go and run a certain distance to see how fast it runs and so forth. That is not recorded. I can't give you statistics on injury rates at non-sanctioned trials, (a) because they -

Ms O'CONNOR - They don't exist as far as we know.

Mr CARROLL - They don't exist.

Ms O'CONNOR - There again is gap in lifecycle tracking.

Mr CARROLL - And they can be held at any location.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, that's right.

I've got one more question. I asked the CEO of Tasracing in February this year what was the test for determining whether a dog that's been injured should be euthanised. I just wanted to understand whether you were across what is the test or the standard that Tasracing or the chief vet would apply in deciding whether or not a dog that's been injured on or off the track is permitted to be euthanised and under what circumstances?

Mr CARROLL - I'll provide two responses to that. The first, I need to clarify for that is that - and whilst I'm not here to speak on behalf of Tasracing - what I would say is that Tasracing has made and continues to make all efforts to ensure that all injured greyhounds have the opportunity to continue on with a fulfilled life outside of racing and provide a very strong and robust rebate scheme for serious injuries on track. In my experience, certainly as Victoria's previous Racing Integrity Commissioner, it's almost far superior to most other jurisdictions.

As far as the decision that is made, the authority finally rests with the Chief Racing Integrity Officer of Tasracing, who would seek advice from the Chief Vet from Tasracing. My understanding is that the extent of the injury must be significant enough that it impacts on that greyhound that it wouldn't be able to sustain a normal life away from the racetrack. Now, what that would be would be determined on the injury that it would sustain. I'm probably not answering the question the way you like.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, you are.

Mr CARROLL - But what I would say is that my belief is that, whilst the Chief Racing Integrity Officer makes that final determination, that those determinations can only be made by a qualified vet. Even if someone was to ask me, I wouldn't be in a position to say or I wouldn't be qualified to give that opinion.

Ms O'CONNOR - I mean, I think to be fair, it is harder for industry participants to have dogs euthanised here as a result of changes over the last 10 years, which is why a dog like Memphis Rains is sent to Victoria for euthanising with a right hock injury.

Mr WINTER - Just following up on the voluntary exit scheme, is that being funded from the \$4.8 million fund package?

Mr CARROLL - I don't know. I haven't had those discussions yet as far as that's concerned, so I can't answer that question.

Mr WINTER - Do you know: is this being run by NRE or Tasracing or who's actually coordinating or running that \$4.8 million?

Mr CARROLL - Who's running the 4.8?

Mr WINTER - Yes, who's ultimately responsible for that compensation package, as far as you're aware?

Mr CARROLL - I'm not sure. At the end of the day, a final figure's been determined on what the compensation number will be. The \$4.8 million that was initially allocated was to operationalise the transition plan, look at animal welfare issues and potential compensation. After that assessment was made, there'd be a further budget bid that would be made initially through my office as to what the transition plan would look like and then also an assessment of what compensation would look like.

Mr WINTER - So, the 4.8 isn't necessarily for the compensation; it's partly to figure out how compensation would work?

Mr CARROLL - I think that's the initial budget allocation as to what's going to be allocated as far as animal welfare and compensation is concerned.

Mr WINTER - I'm not sure, maybe other Committee members knew about it, but it was a bit out of the blue, the announcement on 1 June about the voluntary exit scheme. Was that something that you recommended to Government or did it come from - was it recommended?

Mr CARROLL - I was asked to actually develop it.

Mr WINTER - Oh, you were? But the idea of it, the suggestion, where did that emanate from?

Mr CARROLL - From the Minister's office.

Mr WINTER - Okay. Right.

Mr CARROLL - I don't know where it came from to the Minister's office.

Mr WINTER - Sure. I'm not expecting you to know exactly where. I'm just trying to understand because this wasn't something that we'd previously discussed in earlier hearings. We've got this as a voluntary exit scheme, you've now written to participants and outlined what that would be. You're seeking feedback from them and them to express interest if they'd like to be a part of it. Is that correct?

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Mr WINTER - Then in terms of what you also mentioned, was around looking at support to potentially move participants interstate, are you able to give us any additional information about that?

Mr CARROLL - No.

Mr WINTER - I think you mentioned in an earlier answer to a question that participants had approached you about being supported to move themselves to race in other jurisdictions.

Mr CARROLL - I wouldn't breach their confidence to the conversations I've had with those individuals.

Mr WINTER - Sure.

Mr CARROLL - But it has been raised: is that an option for trainers to get assistance to relocate interstate?

Mr WINTER - Is that something you're considering at the moment?

Mr CARROLL - I'll listen to all things that are put on the table by the participants. We're not ruling anything out and we're not ruling - this is a period of pure consultation to see what options they're considering so I can take those back and discuss those.

Mr WINTER - Do you think that would be a bit at odds with the Government's policy, though, to be supporting greyhound trainers to simply move their operation to another jurisdiction?

Mr CARROLL - I can't speak on behalf of the policy as far as what they determine is acceptable and what isn't. All I can do is develop the transition plan as to - I've made the decision the transition plan will align with the Bill and then put on the table, recognising that there would be some people that choose not to wait for that decision to be made, to assist those in either exiting the industry or being relocated. What the Government thinks of that, that's up to them.

Mr WINTER - Sure.

Ms RATTRAY - I'm just interested in the counselling and wellbeing support services that have been offered. Has there been any data collated in regard to how many people have been accessing either Positive Solutions or Rural Alive and Well? Just numbers - obviously you don't have any full details. But I'm just interested in what uptake there has been and also the on-track opportunities as well around the support for mental health and wellbeing.

Mr CARROLL - There has been. As I think I mentioned last appearance that I had, that we would be looking at the data of take-up from the on-track welfare services and, at this stage, the service has been offered at seven race meetings, There's been a total of 22 one-on-one sessions that have been conducted, a total of 15 group sessions that have been undertaken and a total of 74 participants that have taken up the services that have been provided. We're working at the moment as to what those ongoing services would look like, as I think I raised that this was going to essentially be preliminary sessions to see what the uptake was like before we

continued on with those services. We've made a decision that we will continue on with those services at race meetings.

It's clear from the data that we've obtained that there's a greater uptake of having those face-to-face meetings than people ringing up on the hotline, which was quite minimal. I think we had two calls that were made to the EAP (employee assistance program) service over a six-month period and I can't say, because they're confidential, whether any of those were aligned to the actual greyhound phase-out, but we'll continue. We're working through both providers at the moment to see what those services will look like.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you. Really important to have that understanding and that's a significant number in my mind, so thank you.

Mr WINTER - Commissioner, late last year, I think it was in November or December, the first hearing of this Committee, you gave evidence to the Committee that the legislation was an essential requirement of making sure we have a clear pathway and transition to cease greyhound racing by 2029. You followed up and Ms O'Connor said you'd presumably support its passage through Parliament this year, preferably, in order to be able to get on with your work that you've been given, and you said, 'I think it's essential'. Obviously, the legislation didn't pass in December. Given that you said it was essential that the legislation pass in December last year, how is the legislation not having passed impacting the timelines and the transition plan to get to having phased greyhound racing out completely by 2029?

Mr CARROLL - Look, there's no doubt that the delay in legislation provides a lack of certainty to all stakeholders as to what's taking place. As I said before, the transition plan that we're developing is based on the Bill itself or is fundamentally bound by the Bill with other add-ons, such as rehoming, and I won't go into those details at the moment. The decision whether the Bill is passed is obviously one for Parliament to decide and, clearly, the longer it takes we will see more greyhounds being bred, which will impact the rehoming options that we have as we go along. But it provides, I suppose, a lack of certainty to the participant base, which, as we've spoken about earlier, increases the anxiety and stress that those participants are going through.

Mr WINTER - What's the point at which you need to push back from 30 June 2029 to a later date, given the delays so far?

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, the deed ends on 30 June 2029.

Mr WINTER - Ms O'Connor, I didn't interrupt you. Hopefully I can -

Mr CARROLL - Look, it's not my position to determine or make recommendations on that date to the Government or this Parliament.

Mr WINTER - I'm just trying to square this because you told us it was essential that the legislation got through in order for you to develop and present the transition plan and we're, what are we, nearly eight months down the track since that period. We don't have - you've been unable to get moving because you haven't got the legislation. What's the point in which, in your view, there's going to need to be a pushback in the date for the finalisation of greyhound racing?

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Mr CARROLL - I'm not understanding your question here, Mr Winter. Is there a question -

Mr WINTER - Well, you said it was essential, did you not -

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Mr WINTER - that it was essential that the Bill pass in order for you to get moving on the transition plan?

Mr CARROLL - No, I said it was not for me to get moving to develop the transition plan. What I said was that the Bill is essential to the development of the transition plan and the contents of the transition plan. For example, and I haven't had these discussions at this stage, if there's no Bill and if the policy position remains and I haven't had these conversations with the Government that greyhound racing will finish, then the transition plan I have is irrelevant. We would look at - I haven't even given consideration as to what that option looks like. As far as the transition plan that I'm developing, that's based on the prohibitions that are placed in the Bill. As far as that's - without the Bill being passed, I don't have a transition plan at this stage.

Mr WINTER - So, the Government's position is that - they're saying that if they can't get the Bill passed, they will simply defund greyhound racing. What work have you or your office -

Mr CARROLL - I haven't done any work on that at this stage.

Mr WINTER - Have you been asked to do any work on that?

Mr CARROLL - No, I haven't.

Mr WINTER - Do you think it's safe, fair, that that sort of policy be pursued without legislation?

Mr CARROLL - You'd have to ask the Government for that position.

Mr WINTER - I'm sort of asking what your advice is on this, given your role in this, and you've been an advocate for - well, I won't put words in your mouth - but you're advocating pretty clearly around what the legislation allows you to do. How do you think -

Mr CARROLL - I need to make it clear, Mr Winter, I'm not advocating for the decision that's being made by the Government. My position is that I've been asked to write the transition Bill - the transition plan, as far as that's concerned. The decision to phase-out greyhound racing was done by the Government. We've been asked to write a transition plan, which we're currently doing, that's based on the current Bill that's before Parliament. If the Bill doesn't get passed, then we'll have those discussions as to what then the policy position is with the Government moving forward, regardless of, as I said, the decision of when that date is. At the moment we've been told the date is 30 June 2029 and we're working towards that date and all the work that we're doing regarding the transition and working towards modelling and what greyhound numbers are to that date. Clearly, what is in the Bill is looking at good animal welfare issues of reducing numbers that we can have a manageable level of greyhound numbers by 30 June [2029].

Mr WINTER - Because part of the phase-out, in that same hearing if I recall correctly, you talked about reducing the number of greyhound racing meets over time -

Mr CARROLL - Yes.

Mr WINTER - including from the next racing calendar year. Tasracing's just released its new calendar and they've actually increased the number of greyhound racing meets for next year. How does that accord with your plan?

Mr CARROLL - At the moment, there's no transition plan because the transition plan doesn't come into effect until the Bill's been passed.

Mr WINTER - That's right. But you were advocating that it required a gradual reduction in greyhound racing meets over time and we've just seen Tasracing issue their latest calendar that increases the number of greyhound racing meets. So, at what point do these things -

Ms O'CONNOR - Says a lot more about Tasracing than it does about the Commissioner.

Mr WINTER - For someone that preaches tolerance, Ms O'Connor, you're very intolerant of views of anyone else.

CHAIR - Just let the Commissioner answer the question. I know that we're coming up to -

Ms O'CONNOR - I've hardly interrupted you at all even though you've said some wild things.

Mr CARROLL - Mr Winter, what I would say to that is Tasracing have representatives on my working group and they're aware of the options that we're looking at as far as the reductions of the number of greyhound racings are concerned. I think Tasracing has been on the record to say that they're not looking at reducing greyhound racing until there's certainty as far as the Bill is concerned. My transition plan that we're developing in consultation with the working group, which they have members on, is based around the Bill. If and when the Bill is passed, if it is passed, then the transition plan will kick off and there are certain recommendations within that - or directions to Tasracing - regarding the number of greyhound races that will take place. That may mean an automatic instant reduction of greyhound races that take place from day one.

So, to your point, when we first started this, we looked at having a launch date of when the Bill was first put before Parliament. That didn't occur, so it's been put back. Now, we are looking at a potential date of 1 September [2026]. I don't know when the Bill's going to go before Parliament again. If that doesn't occur, it'll be pushed back until the next sitting date, as far as that's concerned.

Mr WINTER - Sorry, what was the 1 September [2026] date?

Mr CARROLL - We looked at when Parliament was next sitting, and so we had a 1 September [2026] date. If that doesn't occur on that date, we will look at when Parliament sits again and we will do our remodelling of what greyhound numbers looks like as far as the

number of races are concerned and then what rehoming looks like as far as that's - and the plan will alter again. We're working with the parameters of what occurs with the Bill as far as Parliament's concerned.

Ms WEBB - Just following up on that then, would it be fair to say Tasracing, of course, are operating within the current environment under current arrangements and they have to do their forward planning as per current arrangements; you're operating under something you've been tasked to do that relates to a Bill that's yet to be passed and you just have to be doing that work alongside the Bill and if and when it's passed, your work comes into play then and we've got a reset situation, and at that point, Tasracing would have to reset as well?

Mr CARROLL - Correct -

Ms WEBB - So, the fact that you're both working potentially differently, as Mr Winter laid out, where Tasracing's plans are looking one way, you've expressed a different potential scenario going forward in terms of numbers of races. There's not an inconsistency there, given they're working under current arrangements and your work may come into play once a Bill is passed, if that's what happens.

Mr CARROLL - The number of race meetings, as I said, they're under a certain obligation that they have to -

Ms WEBB - Current arrangements.

Mr CARROLL - promote racing as best they can within Tasmania, and I respect that position. But certainly, as I said, if the Bill is passed and when it does come into effect, the transition plan will take effect immediately.

Ms WEBB - It sounds to me like Tasracing's doing the job it's supposed to be doing at the moment, you're doing the job you're supposed to be doing at the moment, and there's no inconsistency between the two as we go forward.

Mr CARROLL - We're not in conflict with one another. In fact, we're well aware of what each other's obligations and respect those positions.

Ms WEBB - That's what it sounds like to me. I did want to ask you about the feasibility study on the impact of the government's decision to ban greyhound racing, which I think comes to you this month.

Mr CARROLL - Yes, we're hoping to have it by the end of the month.

Ms WEBB - Then I just wanted to be clear about what are the next steps after that? So, after it comes to you then how does that study and the information that it will contain become used or available or public?

Mr CARROLL - We'll provide that to this Committee and the Minister. That will form part of the transition plan, so an appendix of the draft transition plan, and there's no doubt that some of those outcomes will influence what's going to be in the transition plan. That's why we're in a position where we are, where we can't finalise a transition plan totally even though it's aligned to the Bill, until we see what the impact the feasibility study provides. It's not the

economic impact statement that was done on racing I think in 2022, I think it was the last time it was, so I should provide forewarning that it doesn't go to the depths of how that impacts certain individuals within the community and so forth. It's on the impact within the racing industry itself and those that are aligned. There's been a significant amount of work that's been done already in that space through the work that was being completed through Tasracing and the economic impact on the racing industry itself and their business. There is further work that needs to be done and that'll be included on top of that.

Ms WEBB - Has the terms of reference for that study been made public or available?

Mr CARROLL - No.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Is it something that the Committee can ask for, perhaps, from you?

Mr CARROLL - Yes. Sure.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm quite happy to go to the in-camera evidence shortly, but just on - I know you've probably had a look at the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition submission from Tasracing.

Mr CARROLL - No, I haven't yet.

Ms O'CONNOR - Oh. It's interesting reading, Commissioner. But they do note that your proposed reduction in races in order to meet that timeline of the end of June 2029 provides a measured and predictable decline in greyhound racing throughout the transition period; provides consistent dogs per race numbers. It would seem that, should your proposed reduction of races be put in place by Tasracing, if the Bill passes, that by the last year of the industry here the number of races will have reduced by close to two thirds. Is that the numbers that you would have expected to see?

Mr CARROLL - Yes. What we're looking at is a gradual decline and perhaps I can go further into that in camera and talk about what that looks like, given the fact it hasn't been finalised, I don't want to provide supposition.

CHAIR - If there's no further questions for open? We are aware that you've obviously made a request to have an in-camera session and I'm very much aware that we've only got five minutes left of this particular hearing, but -

Ms WEBB - Aren't we going until 5?

Ms O'CONNOR - The Commissioner is with us until 4.30 and our meeting is until 5.

Mr CARROLL - Happy to go as long as you want.

Mr WINTER - You shouldn't say that.

CHAIR - We appreciate that. With that, I will just end the broadcast.

The public hearing concluded at 4.25 p.m.