

RACING

Q1. Regarding Greyhound racing:

- a. **What progress is GRV making towards implementation of the recommendations of the Chief Veterinary Officer and Racing Integrity Commissioner reports and is there any allocation in the budget towards this or for any purpose to greyhound racing?**

The Government and GRV are continuing to work together to implement the 68 recommendations made by the Racing Integrity Commissioner and the Chief Veterinary Officer to improve animal welfare within the greyhound racing industry.

To date, 35 of the recommendations have been implemented, a further 16 are actively underway and 17 are under consideration.

Recommendations that have been implemented include:

- strengthened live baiting and luring offences
- the suspension of the Greyhound Owners and Breeders Incentive Scheme (GOBIS)
- a prohibition on the presence of certain animals – dead or alive – at venues being used for greyhound training or racing
- a new offence under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA) for being present at a place where live baiting is occurring
- bolstered powers for GRV inspectors to enter premises and share information with other animal welfare and law enforcement bodies
- the introduction of a requirement for the industry to comply with a new animal welfare code of practice

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources has released a draft Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds for comment.

GRV has significantly increased funding for animal welfare and integrity measures over the last 4 years, including increased funding for:

- the Greyhound Adoption Program by 290% to more than \$2.59 million for the 2016-17 financial year
- animal welfare by 600% to more than \$3.68 million for the 2016-17 financial year
- integrity and stewards by 200% to more than \$10.96 million for the 2016-17 financial year.

GRV is also able to apply for funding through the Victorian Racing Industry Fund for integrity or animal welfare projects.

Q2. **In June 2015, Mr Paul Bittar was engaged to undertake a review of the integrity functions of Racing Victoria, Harness Racing Victoria and Greyhound Racing Victoria. The review was subsequently expanded to consider the current framework for the racing appeals and disciplinary system.**

Following extensive consultation with the industry, Mr Bittar has recommended the establishment of a new body, the Victorian Racing Integrity Unit (VRIU) to deliver integrity services for the three codes of racing.

Mr Bittar also recommended that the appeals and disciplinary system be restructured to remove the appeal to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

(VCAT) of decisions by Racing Appeals and Disciplinary Boards and to establish a single cross-code Racing Appeals and Disciplinary Board (RADB).

The Victorian Government has accepted the 2 key recommendations in principle and will work in partnership with the key racing stakeholders to implement these recommendations over 2 years.

a. What progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the Bittar review?

The Government is working with Racing Victoria (RV), Harness Racing Victoria (HRV), GRV and industry participants to identify strategies to strengthen public confidence in racing integrity, and to consider the form, functions and funding model for the Victoria Racing Integrity Unit (VRIU).

Consultation is being undertaken on the need for restructuring of the racing appeals and disciplinary system to minimise delays and unnecessary costs while ensuring the right to a fair hearing.

b. What funding has been allocated in this budget to reducing the vulnerability of the sport to corruption?

GRV, HRV and RV are responsible for the development, promotion, management and funding of integrity related matters for their respective racing code in Victoria.

The Office of the Racing Integrity Commissioner (ORIC) was established under the Racing Act 1958 to provide independent oversight of integrity across all three racing codes. The ORIC has a range of monitoring functions and audit powers aimed at increasing public confidence in the integrity of the Victorian racing industry.

The ORIC is funded at more than \$1.1 million annually from Department of Justice and Regulation appropriations budget.