

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RACING AND WAGERING WESTERN
AUSTRALIA ACTS**

**INQUIRY INTO THE RACING AND WAGERING WESTERN AUSTRALIA
ACTS**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN
AT BUNBURY
TUESDAY, 6 APRIL 2010**

SESSION FOUR

Members

**Mr John McGrath (Chairman)
Hon Max Trenorden (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm
Mr John Bowler
Hon Alyssa Hayden
Mr Peter Watson**

Hearing commenced at 1.13 pm

HEMSLEY, MR PETER GEORGE
Secretary, Collie Harness Racing Club,
examined:

PIMM, MRS ROSANNE
Treasurer, Collie Race Club,
examined:

PIMM, MR ROBERT
Committee member, Collie Race Club,
examined:

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on the Review of the Racing and Wagering WA Acts, I would like to thank you for your appearance before us today. The purpose of this hearing is to assist the committee in its inquiry into the Racing and Wagering Western Australia acts. You would have seen a copy of the committee's specific terms of reference. For the benefit of Hansard and those observing, I would like to introduce myself and the other members of the committee present today. I am John McGrath, the Chairman. To my left is Max Trenorden, Deputy Chairman; Alyssa Hayden, MLC; and Peter Watson, MLA. On my right is John Bowler, MLA, and Matt Benson-Lidholm, MLC.

This committee is a joint standing committee of the Parliament of Western Australia. This hearing is a formal procedure of the Parliament and therefore commands the same respect given to proceedings in the house itself. Even though the committee is not asking witnesses to provide evidence on oath or affirmation, it is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. This is a public hearing and Hansard will be making a transcript of the proceedings for the public record. If you refer to any documents during your evidence, it would assist Hansard if you could provide the full title for the record. Before we proceed, I also need to ask you a series of questions. Have you completed the "Details of Witness" form?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form about giving evidence to a parliamentary committee?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you receive and read the information for witnesses briefing sheet provided with the "Details of Witness" form today?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have any questions in relation to being a witness at today's hearing?

The Witnesses: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you please outline the operations of your respective clubs, the number of meetings you have per year, how many of those are TAB meetings and basically a little about how long you have been going and so forth.

Mr Hemsley: We have four race meetings a year in February-March, usually a fortnight apart. We always race on Sundays.

The CHAIRMAN: Are they TAB meetings?

Mr Hemsley: Yes, they are all TAB meetings.

The CHAIRMAN: With Sky Channel?

Mr Hemsley: No, no Sky Channel. We have Sky Channel coming into us so we can watch other meetings. Generally, we are funded for seven races per meeting, which are usually full. On the odd time we have had only six. Certainly this year we had seven. It is very seldom that we do not have full fields, just the odd race or two at our meetings. I think I can say that we have a very big local following. Over the past two seasons, this season in particular, we had a much larger influx of younger people. We still get our older people coming in you but a few of them are starting to drop off the perch. A lot more younger people are coming and quite a few local syndicates have been involved with local horses racing.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have a local population of horses trained?

Mr Hemsley: We have 18 local trainers. At the moment between 50 and 60 trotting horses are being trained in Collie, at varying stages of their preparation. On average, between 20 and 25 horses that are trained in Collie are racing per week.

The CHAIRMAN: Mrs Pimm, could you tell us a little about the Collie Race Club, its history and how many meetings you have each year?

Mrs Pimm: The race club in its current location has been going for about 25 or 26 years. Originally, it was on the site of the old golf course but when they went into recession in the early 1950s, the golf club took the racecourse. My husband was the main instigator in getting the section of land where the race club is now. We have developed that over the years. The original use of the turf club back then was to have it for the centenary of Collie Coal. We got the race club up for that meeting.

We were having two meetings a year but it has been cut back to one. We only have one meeting now, which is on Cox Plate day each year. It will be held on 23 October this year. It is always a very successful meeting. As Peter has just said, we are now finding that the younger people are coming along as well. We have some good young active members within the race club and they are bringing along a lot of younger people. I think that is fantastic. With racing not being in Collie for several generations, that age group just disappeared and there was only the older group, like me, who had been involved in racing for a long period that had horses in Collie. Now we are getting all these younger ones. I think that is fantastic. I concur with what Peter said about the trots. To see all the young people at the trots and the young trotting drivers is great.

The CHAIRMAN: What about the horse population?

Mrs Pimm: We do not have a big horse population. We did have at one stage but the unfortunate thing is that we cannot get riders.

The CHAIRMAN: You cannot get track rig riders?

Mrs Pimm: Yes, we cannot get track rig riders. That is the difficult part of it—trying to get trainers back into the area again. The track itself is fantastic.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it a grass track?

[1.20 pm]

Mrs Pimm: No, it is a good sand track. Actually, the trotting club harness drivers frequently work their horses on the Collie track. A number of them actually use the Collie track for training purposes, with, I must say, great success. We work very well together, the trotting club and the race

club. We help each other out a bit and share a few of our things, so it is good. We have six races at each race meeting. We tried to up the stake moneys above what is given to us by RWWA, and it has always been a very successful meeting. We do a very good tote turnover. For two out of the last three years we have been TAB, but before that they would not allow us to be TAB, but now we seem to have cracked that. And hopefully we will continue to be TAB, because having the TAB meeting just makes such a big difference. A lot of people may not know the reason, but I think it just gives prestige, and you obviously get more people betting on the horse. It just gives it some sort of status, I think, being a TAB meeting.

The CHAIRMAN: What sort of coverage do you get? What sort of turnover do you get off course on Cox Plate day?

Mrs Pimm: Last year we turned over about \$70 000-odd off course and about \$50 000 on course. The year before it was a fair bit more, but we had a bit of a problem last year with some telephone hook-up with the line to the TAB and that did knock us around a little bit. But, yes, it is quite good. I think for the previous year, between the bookmakers and the oncourse and the offcourse it totalled about \$160 000.

The CHAIRMAN: Just before the other panel members ask a question, I would just like to say that the main purpose of this inquiry is to look at the act itself—the RWWA act—which was brought in in 2003 with the formation of RWWA, and to see whether participants in the industry like yourselves—stakeholders, you might say—think that the act is serving the purpose, whether you think there needs to be any change to the act, and whether the running of RWWA could be improved in any way in all sorts of areas. Could you both just give us some comments on how you think this new form of governance of racing, compared with what the industry had before, is working? Maybe we will start with you, Peter.

Mr Hemsley: I personally think that Racing and Wagering Western Australia is the best thing that has happened, certainly for trotting and I would say probably for all of them. There certainly were some teething problems. A lot of those have been ironed out. There is one thing that our club certainly feels is a huge problem; that is, we feel that Racing and Wagering WA should be fostering the local product, but not to the detriment of the other ones as we realise that a lot of the money and turnover comes from there. If your race at a meeting does not run on time, okay bad luck, you do not get coverage because you have got to fill in, but if your meeting is running on time—and I am afraid it happened to me with a horse of mine that happened to be racing. My race was held up by 26 minutes while they waited for a race at Singapore that ran 10 minutes late, and there are various other things like that. I personally feel that we are Racing and Wagering WA, so all of the meetings in WA should get preference, provided they are doing the right thing. When something happens—okay, if they are running late—there is not a lot you can do about it. But, yes, that is our major criticism. The other one that has been bandied about recently, and I do not know whether it is the same in the thoroughbred industry, is that there has been a perception with regard to integrity, in terms of how some of the professional people are treated as against little country people. As I said, it may only be a perception. I certainly have no particular data or anything, but I have heard a lot of people talking. I go to a lot of race meetings and trot meetings and there certainly has been that perception. The third one, and you have probably heard this to death—I certainly heard the last mob talking about it—is Racing Radio. I even heard Collie being mentioned, I mean literally. I live in Collie, but to listen to a race I have to park my car a hundred yards up the road, pointing diagonally across the road, to get reception, and in a coal-mining town—a big, major centre—it seems unbelievable that this is still the case.

The CHAIRMAN: So you cannot get it at your home?

Mr Hemsley: No.

The CHAIRMAN: All right. Mrs Pimm, what about from the thoroughbred point of view—your club's activities—how do you think that RWWA is performing?

Mrs Pimm: When RWWA was first introduced they took over the management of clubs as far as race days are concerned. Although I am the treasurer, I am the race-day secretary as well, and have been for a long time, so I have been through both systems. In earlier days, it would drive you nuts when you had to do all the jockeys' percentages and their insurances, and the owners and trainers and everything else, and you had just had people coming in after the last race everywhere—it was really, really hard. Now, of course, the difficulty during the day is how to fill in your time, because the payments and everything else have been taken over, and that is really good. And the way they get up the fields and all that sort of thing on the computer has been a fantastic improvement over the years. So I really cannot have anything but praise. The reception you get from the staff you talk to up there is always very good. They are always very helpful. I find them very positive in 99 per cent of cases. I guess from a funding point of view, country clubs always struggle to try to keep the stake money up. With the RWWA funding that now comes in, of course, it has certainly made life much easier for country clubs, but our stake money is still considerably below that of provincials. If you are trying to get horses to come and you are in competition with some of the provincial clubs, it makes it very, very difficult. Of course, what happens is that you try to top up the stake money that you receive and then that takes away from what you can spend on your club for infrastructure. RWWA, of course, does not give you any funding for infrastructure. And if you are a club like Collie that has sort of come from scratch and you have to build everything up and try to modernise things, it makes it very, very hard. I think that probably the level of stake money could be looked at, but as you would agree, in this economic climate that is very difficult. Generally I would say that things are pretty good.

Hon MAX TRENORDEN: Could you just let us know the patronage you get on your days? How many would you expect on your one day? How many people would you get?

Mrs Pimm: Last year I would say we had close to 500 people there. That would be the best crowd we have had in 25 years. And, once again, it reflects that younger people are coming along to the races. We have one guy on the committee who works with Verve Energy and he deals a lot with the contractors, so we now have a corporate tent there and they bring along a lot of people to the races, which is great. Generally, the younger generation are coming into the races with the fashions on the field and things like that that we can now run, whereas before you could not do that sort of thing. It is just making it more lively. Some of these people are going to get into horses. I mean, you know what the country is like: you get a good horse in the town and the whole town follows it. It is a great thing for racing; it really gives that spark that racing needs.

Hon MAX TRENORDEN: That is correct. So what about profitability? Do you make a reasonable profit on your day?

Mrs Pimm: The last couple of years we have made reasonable profits, but of course the expenses are going up as well. You think, "Oh gee, we've done really well," but then when the bills come in you get deflated, because they are high. Now, for instance, we are getting the tote caravan down from Perth, which is great. My son actually went and picked it up and brought it down, but next year or this year it is going to cost us well over \$1 000 for these new terminals that they have brought in. That is an expense that we have not had to pay before. A lot of the profits that you make on your tote are going to go towards the expenses.

Hon MAX TRENORDEN: Does the shire assist you? Do you pay rates?

Mrs Pimm: No. We have a peppercorn rental. It is a crown reserve vested in the shire for the purpose of a racetrack. Out at the racetrack, as well as the harness drivers using it as a training venue, we also have a pony club and we are looking at another group coming in, like a horse-riding group. But the big one that has made it good for us is that the West Australian Endurance Riders Association has made its headquarters at the Collie Race Club. They have come in with a little bit of money, which has then enabled us to put our meagre funds together and we have gone for grants. Last year we got some money from royalties for regions to put water on, because we only ever had

bore water, so we now have reticulated water. And we upgraded our power supply, which was very much out of date. It actually died two weeks before they started to put in the new lot. So that has been fantastic. We had \$50 000 for that project. I think the race club put in about \$8 000, the Endurance Riders Association put in some, and the rest came in grants. Now we are putting up a big shed. The best part about the endurance people is that they can get money from the Department of Sport and Recreation, whereas the race club is not eligible. We do not have an avenue now. The turf club, or RWWA, used to give us some money, but we now cannot get any of that sort of money.

Hon MAX TRENORDEN: Is that the same sort of figure for trots?

Mr Hemsley: Yes, certainly our profitability over the last few years has been very good. We are running very well at the moment. I would not say that we have plenty of money, but, yes, we are going well and we are looking at doing some infrastructure ourselves. Rosanne mentioned the harness racing people. She talked about a couple, but in fact there are about eight or nine of us who train out at the race club regularly, and by regularly I mean every day.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you do jog work—slow work?

Mr Hemsley: Jog work and fast work.

The CHAIRMAN: You do fast work too?

Mr Hemsley: Yes, I do all of my fast work out there, mainly because I have a horse that cannot get round the Collie track.

Mr P.B. WATSON: So how far would you go, Peter, with your horses, and how far would the other Collie trainers go to race? What is the furthest race?

Mr Hemsley: The furthest I have been, and I only went there once because it was for winning the community cup series, was to Geraldton last year, which is a 1 400-kilometre round trip, but I would not do that normally.

The CHAIRMAN: Did your horse win?

Mr Hemsley: He ran third, but it was enough to win the series, yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Hon MAX TRENORDEN: Excellent; well done!

The CHAIRMAN: When you finish answering Mr Trenorden's question, I would not mind you making some comment on the decision to shut down Geraldton, as a harness person.

Mr Hemsley: Okay. Can you refresh my memory?

Hon MAX TRENORDEN: What sort of numbers would you expect at a race meeting? You have already told us about your turnover. I guess you have the same sort of participation?

Mr Hemsley: That is right, yes.

Hon MAX TRENORDEN: Do you pay rates to the shire?

Mr Hemsley: No, we do not pay rates, but I think it is \$220 a year, which is nothing. The shire is pretty good. We use the shire truck on race days. But our track is fully reticulated. The sprinklers come on three nights a week, in terms of preparation for the horses to work. This is at the trotting track. I was a bit surprised when Rosanne said they had a crowd of about 500 at the last meeting. I would have thought it was much bigger than that. We had our cup meeting just a fortnight ago—that was last Sunday, was it not? We ran out of race books. We would have gone close to having 1 000 people there; it was a huge day. That was a big day, but we certainly have between 600 and 1 000 regularly.

The CHAIRMAN: And the closure of Geraldton?

Mr Hemsley: When Geraldton first came on, a lot of people were supposedly saying, “Oh yes, the galloping trainers will take out your licences as there would be a lot of local horses up there.” That is not the case. I personally think, and I know it is the view of our executive, that the trotting industry cannot really afford to have—they said in the paper that the average distance horses had to travel was 200 kilometres. Wanneroo and Northam are a heck of a lot more than 200 kilometres away from Geraldton. That is wasted money.

[1.35 pm]

Mr J.J.M. BOWLER: Can I lead in from that? A previous witness has forecast the demise of their clubs, clubs maybe even a bit bigger than yours; that there is a centralisation seemingly within RWWA. Whilst you have a local member who would let the world know of any attempt to reduce anything to Collie, the fact of the matter is at the start of this you said that you supported the fact that RWWA is totally independent; independence means that politicians do not have too much influence about what happens. Are you not concerned about that?

Mr Hemsley: We are obviously concerned; however, all the way through we have been told that community clubs, providing that they can show the support of their community in terms of patronage and sponsorship—we have a sponsor for every single one of our races—we feel that we could show that; I mean, our turnover averaged \$35 000 this year; it would have been a little more, but we lost one race at the last meeting through an accident, but because of that we honestly do not feel that we would be. I preface that also by saying it would be lovely to see some of the hierarchy of RWWA, and parliamentarians, coming down to see some of what the clubs do provide. There are some clubs that I have been to and, yes, it is you, me and the gatepost that are there. Quite frankly, I do not know how they survive on that. But I can see how it is a worry for many clubs, but for the reasons that I said in terms of the local patronage, I do not think it is a worry for our club, although our —

Mr J.J.M. BOWLER: And the race club?

Mr Hemsley: Sorry; our offcourse turnover is not good but I do not know what we can do about that other than get it on Sky, and I cannot see us getting that.

Mrs Pimm: I think up until the last couple of years the Collie Race Club was probably a real pain as far as RWWA was concerned, you know, we got in there by false pretences to start off with, virtually, and they did not like it all the way through! But we have had really good turnovers and I think when Peter says \$35 000 turnover, the race club generally does a lot better than that. I think that is just generally the thing; we all know that thoroughbred racing usually attracts more patronage on the TAB than the other codes. But to me, though, that does not matter; I mean, we are all in this for the love of horses or for the dogs, if it is the greyhounds, and I do not care who makes the most money as long as it is there to be shared around, that sort of thing, and everybody has a fair go.

There has never been any talk at all of the Collie Race Club not being able to exist that I know of anyway, although I am sure that there might be some who would not like it to be there, but I think we serve a purpose and of course it is that it is a community club and the townspeople like the racing. A lot of people come to the Collie races from out of town too because it is the history of Collie. As Peter has said, Collie is a big place now and it is only going to expand, and even through the recessions that have been on in the past few years, Collie has not seen it. With what is going to happen there in the next few years, it is only going to expand. When you have racing or trotting within a local community, the community gets behind these horses because they are putting money into the TAB and I think this is what a lot of people do not recognise; not all the good horses—trotters or gallopers—come from the metropolitan area; many of the best horses in this state have come from country areas. When a good horse comes from a country area, the whole of the country is on that horse; it just gives that lift and keeps people involved.

Mr J.J.M. BOWLER: Would you not like to see some assurance within the legislation that would give you stronger protection into the long term?

Mrs Pimm: I do not think we would object to that.

Mr Hemsley: I do not think you would object to it, but I think you have also got to be very careful that you are not doing the industry a disservice. Pre-RWWA —

Mr J.J.M. BOWLER: In other words, if RWWA said, “Look, we want to close you down because you’re not profitable; you’re too small. Four meetings a year, one main meeting a year—it doesn’t matter, we’ll just close you down.”

Mr Hemsley: If that was all that was said—I mean, pre-RWWA, we had plenty of fights in Collie. Since I have been on the committee, which is 29 years now, we have had to fight for our lives three or four times and people like Hilda and Mick have gone in to fight for us. I am trying to work out how to say this, but I guess in terms of some form of assurance, given certain parameters—for instance, if, say, Wittenoom had been racing, what happens there? Just because it would then be in the act, given the fact that nobody lives there anymore, that would be stupid.

The CHAIRMAN: Mrs Pimm, you have been in the racing industry a long time and you are obviously aware of the challenges that are facing RWWA. Given the downturn in the economy globally, the arrival of product fees and things like that and the corporate bookmakers taking a lot of money away from the traditional forms of TAB betting and turnover, how do you think the industry is going in Western Australia? What do you see as the future, looking forward in the next few years, given that we have just come through a period of huge growth in TAB turnover and then there was the flattening out effect caused by the global economic downturn? Now you have these other factors that we are told are going to cost RWWA anything between \$12 million and \$18 million a year in paying product fees to eastern states race clubs. What are the challenges you see ahead and how do you see it going?

Mrs Pimm: It is a difficult one and I am sure that RWWA would love to know the answer to that question! The racing industry, I think, can probably cope reasonably well. I think that, unfortunately—and I suppose this is putting it back to you as a government—governments do not appreciate just how much the racing industry means to the whole of the Australian economy. Going back to a few years ago, I am not sure what it is now, the racing industry I think was considered to be the third largest employer of people within the Australian economy because it is not only the trainers, owners and that sort of thing, but also the feed merchants and it just keeps on rolling all the way down. So it is vital that the actual racing industry itself, I suppose, gets the support and the recognition that it deserves and I am quite sure that that does not occur. So, certainly, I think that there probably has to be some support from governments to the industry to keep it viable into the future. Whether or not in time there will be other ways they will be able to make up the shortfall that is occurring at the moment, the stake money in Western Australia is pretty good in comparison with the other states. I think even provincial racing in Western Australia is quite good in comparison with other provincial clubs within the eastern states. Probably the country clubs, as I said earlier, struggle because we do not get anything for infrastructure and anything that you get you have to juggle between trying to raise the stake and putting it back into the club. I definitely think there needs to be support from the government in recognition of the input the racing industry does have to employment and everything else within the economy.

The CHAIRMAN: You mentioned infrastructure and one of the key things that has been raised with us is that over the years infrastructure at a lot of country clubs has become dilapidated because, basically, it is old.

Mrs Pimm: That is right.

The CHAIRMAN: The biggest challenge facing RWWA is to find the funding to renew that infrastructure and also maintain the prize money at the levels it is at the moment, given the other

factors that have now come in that are eroding RWWA's bottom line. You would have been around in the days of the Racecourse Development Trust Fund, which was funded out of unclaimed dividends.

Mrs Pimm: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you think that the industry should look at bringing back some sort of a racecourse development trust fund whereby that money would be set aside and would not be used for prize money; whether it came out of a reduction in the tax on TAB or wherever it came from, it would have to be used for infrastructure?

Mrs Pimm: I think that would be good but, mind you, back even in those days, for a country club to get any money out of the Racecourse Development Trust was sort of like getting blood out of a stone; it was very, very difficult back then. We, the country club, are the forgotten creature; mostly they do not want to know about us. Certainly, the provincials were able to access a lot of money. The only thing RWWA has ever put in to us or the turf club, going back years, is that they funded us for half the new running rail when it came in a few years ago. We had a top line jarrah running rail all the way around, but they would only fund us for half the aluminium or whatever it is that we have now; we had to get the rest that from the community to do the —

The CHAIRMAN: Was that RWWA or the turf club?

Mrs Pimm: No, that came from the racecourse, when they had the racecourse —

The CHAIRMAN: Development —

Mrs Pimm: I am just trying to think about when those new rails came in—about 2000, 2001 —

The CHAIRMAN: It was 2003.

Mrs Pimm: It would have been RWWA then, but they would only fund us for half the running rail and I think it was from just before the bend into the straight around past the winning post. We got the rest of it out of a fund, like a local Collie fund, to do that because we considered at that time that if we were going to be half a race club, well, we needed to do it properly in the first place.

I am just trying to think what else they have given us money for. I have some money on hold at the moment because we have to put up a stewards' tower, which they gallantly gave us from Pinjarra that we now have to try to erect at Collie, and I am sort of in the process of getting that done. But I think in about 25 or 30 years they are about the only two things that I can ever remember us being funded for; everything else we have done ourselves, mainly with the local community.

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: Can I ask a question about infrastructure? It is just a personal issue that I have. As administrators, particularly the two of you, how mindful are you of the responsibilities that you as administrators have in respect of occupational health and safety issues? I say that using an example, when part of the committee was at the Geraldton Cup, one thing that caught me by surprise, and I was very concerned, was the fact that at one stage some hats—you know Geraldton can be a bit windy from time to time—blew onto the course. I am just thinking what would happen if hats blew onto the course and a horse fell—and I know some of the judges' towers around the place are not the best; they are not quite *F Troop* but they are not the greatest—how mindful are you of issues associated with occupational health and safety, given the problems that infrastructure funding poses for you?

Mrs Pimm: Certainly, RWWA in the past couple of years have been very, very mindful of that. Actually, that is the other thing that we did get from RWWA; they gave us some money to up our safety fences and we had to put mesh around them and all that sort of thing to which a lot of people said, "Oh, you know, we've never had an accident in 25 years." But you never know when it is going to happen, so to me that was bringing us into the modern age, so I did not object to that. They gave us the money for the materials and we did the work. I think, yes, we are conscious of it and

you have to be. Certainly, RWWA are very, very safety conscious and some of the things that they impose probably most people think are ridiculous, but they have to —

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: This applies as well to the Collie Trotting Club, do these sorts of issues also apply to conditional sorts of grants, like if they give you half the cost of putting in a new running rail or something like that and they ask you to fund the rest of it, do you see any issues in that regard? Should they be funding the whole lot?

Mr Hemsley: Personally, no because we had exactly the same issues with raising our outside rail and fence and we did that all ourselves. We have had issues where we have had to replace our steward stands. It is interesting that the president and I visited a club quite recently and we were commenting why is it that Collie seems to be the only ones where they insist all these things have to happen, when there are certain other clubs—I do not want to name any clubs—where they obviously have not, to the same extent that we have done. We have always said that we have grizzled and groaned and grouched about being told to do something, but we go and do it —

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: So you would like to see more continuity in that regard?

Mr Hemsley: Uniformity; yes.

Mr Pimm: If you wanted to be thorough on occupational health and safety, there would not be many race clubs in Australia that would survive —

[1.50 pm]

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: I am viewing it from a RWWA responsibility point of view.

Mr Pimm: Before our last meeting, they came down and inspected the track probably a month before, I guess. A couple of stewards came down and Bernie Ryan, the WA Jockeys Association secretary, was also there. They did an inspection of the course, the track, and the stables facilities, and they wrote a list of jobs that had to be done before the meeting. Most of them were just minor, but they cost money and take time. They do that nearly every year, or they have done it for the past few years.

Mrs Pimm: They do it every year, yes.

Mr Pimm: Basically, the racing side of it is covered, and now, with any infrastructure you add through council by-laws and whatever, they will not let you put anything up unless it is done properly, and that is just the way it is. We are in the process of putting up a new building, extending our current bar public area, and the rules and regulations they have chucked at us to extend onto that are unbelievable—what you have to go through to make sure that it is safe and meets their standards.

Mr J.J.M. BOWLER: While you are talking about the bar, what about administration of the liquor act?

Mrs Pimm: We are all up-to-date, even I have got a responsible serving of alcohol certificate.

Mr J.J.M. BOWLER: How many security staff are you told to employ?

Mr Pimm: I was in charge of the bar last year and the year before, and you go to the courthouse and go through all the procedures and fill out the forms, and then we went and saw the local chief of police. He was a good fellow, very cooperative, and he had had postings to Derby and Port Hedland and all those places been to all the country race meetings. He knows what it is all about. This year, we tried something different because we had a band after the last race that went until nine o'clock, so security was an issue. We spoke about it with the chief of police and we basically went along the line that in the 25 years we have been operating as a race club—I have been to every meeting bar one—I have never, ever witnessed a fight or a major argument or any violence or anything like that; yes, a few people have a good time, but that is about it. We explained that to him and he said, "Look, I'll leave it up to you guys, but you'll definitely have to have a couple of security from, say,

six o'clock onwards, 5.30 pm onwards." He expected us committee people to also help them out if need be. That is the way we did it, and we never had a hassle.

Mr J.J.M. BOWLER: Yet Port Hedland must have spent \$60 000 on security.

Mrs Pimm: Yes, that is ridiculous.

Mr Pimm: That is something that has to be looked into; it is a joke. As mum was saying, the little money that you do make that you can put into infrastructure or something or increase your stake money next year, it just gets whittled away with security guards. I have been to a lot of country race meetings and Kojonup races is one of the best days you will ever go to for an amateur jockey club, and it has four or five security guards. There are about 400 or 500 people there and they all know each other and they all get on and it is just ridiculous, but that is what you have to do. It is hurting the clubs big time, it really is.

Mr Hemsley: On that one, when the issue of Port Hedland came up, we took a deep breath. We did the same: we went along to the police, and they said that whatever is added to the licence—there is a space on the back of the licence—if they add there that they require so many security guards, yes, we have to. But if it is not added, we do not have to, and we confirmed that again with somebody else, that we did not have to. It was interesting that at our second-last meeting the police did come right towards the end and had a couple of little minor issues that they spoke to us about. But at the last meeting they came, unannounced, in the middle of the meeting and they left within five minutes and said everything was fine. In actual fact, we were proud of the young girl who was serving, because a gentleman came up and asked for his beers and asked her to leave the caps on because it was easier for him to carry them, and she told him no, everybody has to have them taken off. I do not know whether they were trying to set us up, but they were, in actual fact, a table of the local cops. I do not honestly believe they were trying to set us up.

Mr P.B. WATSON: That is a commonsense rule, is it not?

Mr Hemsley: Yes.

Mrs Pimm: We have always tried to do the right thing to make sure that we have done whatever we have been asked to do. We have never had to have security during the actual race meeting itself, and it was only this year, because we had the band afterwards, that they asked us to have security. We had two for about three hours and it worked out very well. But I think that, sometimes, if you take a commonsense approach to the local constabulary, then you get off on the right track.

The CHAIRMAN: Thanks for appearing before the committee today. Are there any other points you would like to make?

Mrs Pimm: Racing Radio.

The CHAIRMAN: Racing Radio.

Mrs Pimm: Yes. Robert is the full bottle on that one.

The CHAIRMAN: What was that, Robert?

Mr Pimm: I am amazed that a place as big as Collie, and in the region of Collie with the mines, Western Power, you have got Worsley, all those areas where there are a lot of people who are interested in racing and trotting and punting in general and they cannot access Racing Radio. It must be costing RWWA, or the TAB, an absolute fortune in lost turnover. I know Mick Murray has brought it up in years gone by, and I spoke to Marty Young when he was working for Racing Radio. They all understand, but nothing has ever come of it. You can go to Narrogin, Wagin, Meekatharra—anywhere you like—and some fairly remote places, and they can hear it as clear as day, and yet Collie is probably the second-biggest region in the South West, and you cannot.

Mr J.J.M. BOWLER: Robert, those smaller places, the Meekatharras and that, do it through their local shire council and they provide a service. On the broader issue, radio licences are distributed by the federal government, and that is where the problem lies.

Mr Pimm: I know there is a problem there, but surely we can work through it and something can be done about it.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Especially with the satellites.

Mr Pimm: That is right. We live in a pretty modern world now. As I say, it is turnover going begging, as far as I can see.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not even good between Rockingham and Mandurah.

Mr Hemsley: There are a lot of dead spots.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do you not go to Mandurah any more, John?

The CHAIRMAN: Northam does not have a really good reception.

Hon MAX TRENORDEN: You get to the end of the town side of Northam and one kilometre out of Northam there is nothing.

The CHAIRMAN: It is a problem. They are on the old band and it is obviously an area that needs to be looked at.

Mr Pimm: One other thing is that with RWWA, personally I would like to see what its vision is for country racing, grassroots racing. Have they got one? Is it all about turnover and nothing else? I would like to know.

Mr J.J.M. BOWLER: Have you seen that?

Mr Pimm: No, I have not.

Mr P.B. WATSON: You do not get a mention, and you will not get much out of it, either.

Mr Pimm: I read Perth Racing's website and stuff like that on the net, and it is all centrally based; there is nothing about the country. A friend of mine has opened up his own website called "Grassroots Racing" and he plugs all the country clubs and does a good job, but he gets no recognition or help. I am disappointed because in the South West area—this is supposedly where it is all going to happen in the next 10, 20, 30 years industrial-wise and all the rest of it—we have Bunbury race club and its track is on its knees, basically, and that is it. This is the only race club other than Collie that is here. If this is going to be the big place, the second capital city of Western Australia, surely we need some more racetracks and infrastructure to keep racing going.

Mr Hemsley: I have one last little comment that is sort of a criticism to a certain extent, and it is a criticism of this committee as well, and it is that RWWA forgets that all of the outer country clubs are nearly all run by volunteers, all of whom have full-time jobs. Sometimes the time lines of responses that they expect are just so totally unreasonable—"We want it in two days' time"—and when I am at school, teaching, I cannot do anything, and things like that. I think sometimes with the hierarchy of places, people who live in Perth forget that the small places are run by volunteers, most of whom—Rosanne is lucky, she has retired—have jobs, and people cannot get away at short notice.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for making that point.

I need to remind you that a transcript of this hearing will be forwarded to you for correction of minor errors. Any such corrections must be made and the transcript returned within 10 days from the date of the letter attached to the transcript. If the transcript is not returned within this period it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be added via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on

particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence. Thank you very much.

Hearing concluded at 2.00 pm