1. The *Racing Integrity Act 2016* (RI Act) established the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC), an independent statutory body with a range of functions regarding the integrity of the racing industry, including the greyhound, thoroughbred horse and harness horse racing codes. QRIC was established to create a clear separation between the integrity and commercial activities within the racing industry, as recommended in the Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry report (the MacSporran Report).
2. A review of the operation of the RI Act (administered by the Department of Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) was undertaken in 2019 with the release of a Discussion Paper for public comment. Key issues raised in the Discussion Paper and by stakeholders include:
* dissatisfaction with internal review of original decisions made by QRIC racing stewards;
* the time taken and costs involved for external review of disciplinary decisions by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) and a perceived lack of racing industry expertise on QCAT;
* serious concerns that ‘stays’ of decisions granted by QCAT provide a loophole for industry participants to continue operating, pending review, even though there may be alleged serious and/or repeated breaches of the Rules of Racing.
1. The establishment of an internal review panel within QRIC, the Racing Appeals Panel (the Panel) would replace the existing Internal Review Adjudicator and provide a greater degree of independence and level of expertise than the current arrangements. The Panel would not involve the establishment of a new Queensland Government body, but would be appointed by the Racing Integrity Commissioner and operate from within QRIC.
2. The Panel will operate under Terms of Reference for the review of original decisions and be able to call on additional external expert persons if and as required.
3. Applications for stays of decisions will not be available in circumstances where a decision relates to serious matters affecting human or animal welfare; serious animal cruelty offences; the integrity of the racing industry; or repeated breaches that could give rise to human or animal welfare or integrity concerns. The specific breaches for which applications for stays will not be permitted will be identified in consultation with key stakeholders. It is not proposed to restrict which matters may be referred to QCAT for external review.
4. Cabinet endorsed in principle the proposal to establish a Racing Appeals Panel within the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, to conduct internal reviews of original decisions made by racing stewards.
5. Cabinet endorsed the proposal that applications for stays of decisions be not available for pending internal review and external review of decisions in certain circumstances where serious risk to human and/or animal welfare and/or repeated breaches are involved.
6. *Attachments*:
* Nil.