

RACING INDUSTRY — HORSE DEATHS

96. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

I refer to the death of thoroughbred horse Texan at Ascot Racecourse on 1 January 2013 and the death of thoroughbred horse Ms Funovits at Ascot Racecourse on 20 April 2013.

- (1) How are these incidents being investigated, especially given the claims by the trainers of Ms Funovits that Racing and Wagering WA and Perth Racing were ignoring them following the death of the horse?
- (2) Will the full results of the deceased horses' autopsies be made publicly available?

Mr T.K. WALDRON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. As a minister in this government and on behalf of Racing and Wagering WA, I can say that all allegations are taken extremely seriously. Maintaining integrity is of the utmost importance to the racing industry generally and, of course, to the hundreds and thousands of people who are employed in the industry and to the people who go to the races, and I want to make sure that continues. Racing and Wagering WA is the industry body that is responsible for ensuring the integrity of racing in Western Australia. It invests considerable resources on the investigative units of the stewards. RWWA spent more than \$6.4 million on stewards and their investigative functions and has recently added another investigative position at a cost of \$200 000. RWWA takes it very, very seriously.

The member for Collie–Preston would have seen the allegations made today—I will comment on that before answering the member's other question—in an unsigned and unidentified letter. We are taking that extremely seriously. The stewards have done extra investigations on those races but at this stage have found —

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I distinctly heard that the member for Collie–Preston's question was about the death of two individual horses. He did not ask about the letter that is the subject of the front-page news story today. It appears to me that the minister is reading a prepared answer to the front-page story rather than answering the questions put to him by the member for Collie–Preston, and I suggest that he actually deal with the questions he was asked.

The SPEAKER: Can the minister come back to the point please—succinctly.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr T.K. WALDRON: As I thought I said at the start, all allegations regarding the integrity of racing, which the member for Collie–Preston asked about concerning the death of these horses, are looked into and investigated by RWWA.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: Do you know anything about these two horses and what is happening?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I do. That is what has taken place in this case. I have not seen the full results. It will be up to RWWA to decide what it does or does not make public. RWWA is the body within the racing industry that has the expertise. As the member knows, it is independent. I meet regularly with RWWA and it updates me on these issues. I insist that it follow all those measures very closely because the confidence of the industry relies on that, as the member understands. I will find out what RWWA will disclose on that matter. I understand there are issues that it might not want to disclose.