

Tasracing Integrity Unit

First Anniversary Report

1 February 2025 – 31 January 2026



Overview

1 February 2026 marked the first anniversary of the establishment of the Tasracing Integrity Unit (TIU). The reporting period represents a foundational year for the Unit, characterised by organisational development, operational delivery at scale, and the embedding of strong integrity and governance principles.

The TIU was established to provide independent, consistent, and robust integrity oversight across the Tasmanian racing industry. Throughout its first year of operation, the Unit focused on strengthening regulatory capability, enhancing animal welfare outcomes, and building confidence in the integrity framework among industry participants, stakeholders, and the broader community.

Despite workforce and capacity challenges, the TIU maintained operational continuity and delivered a substantial volume of regulatory, investigative, and administrative activity across all racing codes.

Organisational Development

At commencement, the Tasracing Integrity Unit comprised Stewarding and Operations functions. During the reporting period, the establishment of the Investigations & Animal Welfare (IAW) function materially enhanced the Unit's operational and regulatory capability.

The IAW function introduced dedicated investigative expertise and specialist officers with a specific focus on animal welfare outcomes. This capability strengthened the TIU's ability to manage complex integrity, conduct, and welfare matters and to apply proportionate, evidence-based regulatory responses.

Where appropriate, the IAW function prioritised education and engagement with participants prior to enforcement action. This approach supported improved compliance, strengthened welfare standards, and reinforced the Unit's commitment to fair and balanced regulation.

Workforce and Governance Challenges

The TIU experienced significant workforce challenges during the reporting period arising from dismissals and resignations of Stewards in relation to betting and conduct matters. These events placed pressure on operational capacity and required adaptive resourcing and service delivery arrangements.

While challenging, these circumstances reinforced a clear and deliberate governance position: the Tasracing Integrity Unit applies the same standards of integrity, accountability, and conduct to its own employees as it does to industry participants.

This approach is fundamental to the credibility of the integrity system and underpins stakeholder confidence in regulatory decision-making. Despite these challenges, the TIU continued to deliver core regulatory functions and maintain consistent oversight across the industry.

Operational Performance and Activity Summary

Despite workforce pressures, the TIU delivered a substantial volume of regulatory, investigative, and administrative activity throughout the reporting period. This reflects both the breadth of the Unit's responsibilities and its commitment to integrity, animal welfare, and effective oversight.

Stewarding

The Stewarding function continued to operate at scale throughout the reporting period.

Stewards officiated at 312 race meetings and 108 official trial days, ensuring consistent regulatory oversight across all racing codes. Integrity assurance activities included the collection of 3,662 swab samples, with nine positive animal samples and three positive human samples identified and managed in accordance with established regulatory processes.

Across Stewarding and Investigations & Animal Welfare functions combined, more than 500 inquiries were conducted, demonstrating a high level of regulatory scrutiny and responsiveness to integrity, welfare, and conduct matters.

Operations and Administrative Support

The Operations function provided comprehensive administrative and logistical support to the Tasracing Integrity Unit and industry participants throughout the reporting period.

Key responsibilities included the preparation of statutory reports, receipt and processing of race meeting nominations, and the processing of race results. Operational staff undertook the handicapping of 746 harness races and the grading of 1,584 greyhound races, ensuring accuracy, consistency, and fairness within competition frameworks.

In addition, 1,073 license applications were processed during the reporting period, supporting industry participation while maintaining appropriate regulatory and probity standards.

Key Integrity Reform: Centralised Swab Sample Database

During the reporting period, the Tasracing Integrity Unit implemented a significant integrity reform through the development and deployment of a centralised swab sample database across all racing codes.

Previously, drug-testing data was captured across three separate systems aligned to the individual racing codes. This fragmented approach limited the Unit's ability to undertake consolidated analysis, identify trends, and generate intelligence to inform testing strategies and regulatory responses.

The introduction of a single, centralised database now captures all swab sample information in one system. This reform enables comprehensive cross-code analysis of testing results, supports the identification of emerging integrity risks, and strengthens evidence-based decision-making.

The centralised database represents a shift toward intelligence-led regulation, allowing the TIU to better target testing resources, prioritise higher-risk activities, and respond proactively to integrity threats. This foundational capability will continue to deliver benefits beyond the reporting period and strengthen public and industry confidence in the integrity of Tasmanian racing.

Investigations & Animal Welfare

The Investigations & Animal Welfare function played a central role in strengthening integrity and welfare outcomes during the Unit's first year of operation.

A total of 164 investigations were recorded during the reporting period, with 110 investigations finalised. At 31 January 2026, 54 investigations remained active and subject to ongoing assessment or investigation.

In addition to investigative activity, the IAW function conducted:

- 248 full stable and kennel inspections
- 149 kennel audit visits
- 156 participant visits
- Three blanket testing programs
- Regular out-of-competition testing operations across all Codes

Capability development remained a priority, with one IAW staff member completing a Certificate IV in Investigations, further strengthening internal investigative standards and expertise.

Investigations Overview

Investigations spanned all racing codes and a range of referral sources and regions.

By Racing Code

- Thoroughbred: 64 investigations (39%)
- Greyhound: 60 investigations (37%)
- Harness: 33 investigations (20%)
- Non-specific matters: 7 investigations (4%)

By Type

- Animal Welfare matters: 53 investigations (32%)
- Non animal welfare matters: 111 investigations (68%)

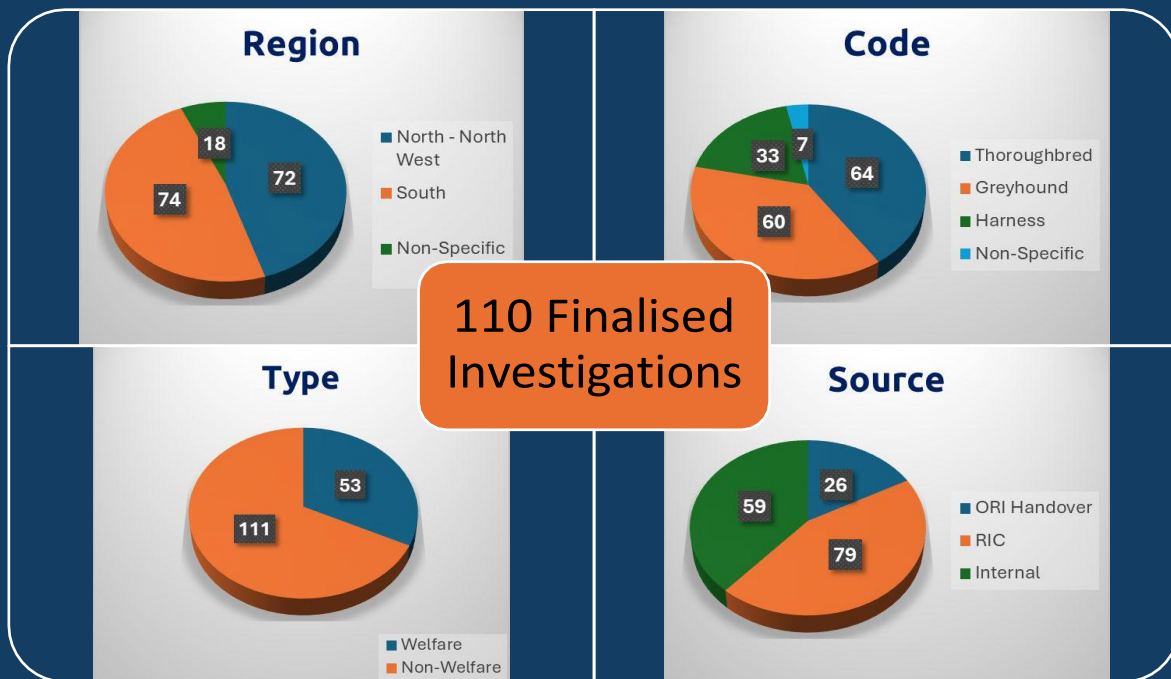
By Source

- Referrals from the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner : 79 investigations (48%)
- Generated by the TIU: 59 investigations (36%)
- Legacy matters transferred from Office of Racing Integrity: 26 investigations (16%)

By Region

- North and North-West: 72 investigations (44%)
- South: 74 investigations (45%)
- Non-specific: 18 investigations (11%)

This distribution reflects a balanced investigative workload across codes and regions, supported by both external referrals and proactive compliance activity.



Investigation Outcomes

Of the 110 investigations finalised during the reporting period:

- 34 investigations (31%) resulted in regulatory or disciplinary action
- 76 investigations (69%) were unsubstantiated or resulted in no further action

Major Cases

- 3 persons warned off after being arrested and charged with serious criminal offences
- 1 participant disqualified for 5 years for multiple serious breaches of the Rules of Racing
- 1 participant disqualified for 2 years for providing false information and withholding criminal convictions on license applications
- 1 participant disqualified for 2 years for an animal cruelty offence
- 1 participant disqualified for 18 months after being arrested and convicted of a serious criminal offence
- 1 participant disqualified for 12 months for improper conduct and preventing officials from performing their duties
- 3 participants each disqualified for 12 months on animal welfare matters

These outcomes demonstrate the Unit's commitment to proportionate, evidence-based decision-making. Matters are pursued thoroughly where warranted, while investigations that do not meet the required evidentiary standard are appropriately finalised without enforcement action.

Regulatory Approach and Interpretation of Results

The investigation statistics reflect a regulatory framework that is thorough, fair, and independent.

The logging of 164 investigations indicates a high level of reporting, monitoring, and proactive identification of potential integrity and animal welfare issues. A 67 per cent completion rate within the

reporting period demonstrates effective case management in the context of complex matters and workforce pressures.

The proportion of investigations resulting in no further action reinforces the importance of an impartial investigative function. Allegations alone do not result in enforcement; regulatory action is taken only where evidence meets the required standard. This approach supports both integrity outcomes and procedural fairness.

Integrity, Accountability and Transparency

Throughout its first year, the Tasracing Integrity Unit demonstrated a strong and consistent commitment to integrity, accountability, and transparency. Decisions taken during the reporting period showed a willingness to uphold standards consistently, including where doing so carried operational consequences.

This approach is central to maintaining public and industry confidence in the integrity framework and supports the long-term sustainability of the Tasmanian racing industry.

Looking Ahead

As the Tasracing Integrity Unit enters its second year of operation, key priorities will include:

- Consolidating and embedding the Investigations & Animal Welfare function
- Strengthening workforce capacity and operational resilience
- Continuing to enhance governance frameworks and internal controls
- Maintaining a strong focus on animal welfare, education, and compliance
- Building stakeholder confidence through consistent, transparent, and accountable decision-making

The first year of operation has established a strong foundation for the future. The TIU remains committed to continuous improvement and the delivery of independent, high-quality integrity services to the Tasmanian racing industry.

Heidi Lester

Chief Racing Integrity Officer
Tasracing Integrity Unit

10 February 2026