

GAMBLING REVENUE

**818. Mr R.C. KUCERA to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:**

In these days of plenty the federal government has recently released a report into poverty and financial hardship. How will the recommendations of the report regarding revenue from gambling impact on Western Australia?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question. The federal government has released a Senate report into poverty and financial hardship. As part of the release of the report, I received an extraordinary letter from the relevant federal minister, the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Mr Mal Brough. He wrote to me on behalf of the commonwealth indicating the commonwealth's concern at the Western Australian government's attitude to gambling and that the states were raking in great amounts of gambling revenues and causing poverty and financial hardship throughout Australia. Naturally, on behalf of the Western Australian government, I wrote back to Mr Brough to make sure he was aware of the facts of this issue. I advised him of our policies on poker machines and electronic gaming machines and how they should be restricted to the one location. Given his seemingly wilful lack of knowledge, I also made him aware that Western Australia subsidises the other states of Australia to an enormous degree, including his own state of Queensland. Funnily enough, I received a mea culpa letter from Mr Brough on 12 October 2006 acknowledging the Carpenter government's excellent policies on gambling. In that letter he stated -

I also understand that Western Australia is the only jurisdiction where Electronic Gaming Machines are illegal outside the state's casino and gambling taxation is not a significant driver of the state's total taxation revenue. This is positively reflected by data showing that Western Australia has the lowest gambling losses per capita in the country.

That letter from the commonwealth government acknowledges the excellent job that the Western Australian government has been doing to ensure that we have low levels of poverty related to gambling. The policy will continue under the Carpenter government.