

BOOKMAKERS, MINIMUM TELEPHONE AND INTERNET BETTING LIMITS, REGULATION

1326. Hon. C.L. Edwardes to the Premier

I refer to the regulation setting minimum telephone and internet betting limits on bookmakers in Western Australia and ask -

- (a) did the Premier write to a Mr Dino Di Cianno on this issue and write 'inter alia' that he had received a detailed briefing from the Minister;
- (b) did the Premier subsequently appear on radio 6PR and say that he could not comment because he had not received a briefing from the Minister;
- (c) will the Premier explain the apparent contradictions between the letter and what was said on radio 6PR;
- (d) in view of the Premier's professed commitment to open and accountable Government, will he take steps to ensure that full details of the Labor Government's reason/s for rejecting and/or not acting on the recommendations of the review into minimum limits on telephone and internet betting are made public; and
- (e) if not, why not?

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b)-(c) It would be clear to anyone listening to the interview that I had not had time to be updated by the Minister on this matter.
- (d) Yes, however, for the information of the member, telephone betting was approved by the Hon Max Evans MLC, Minister for Racing and Gaming in December 1993, with a national telephone betting limit of \$250. The limit was subsequently reduced to \$200.

While in March 1999 the Court Government approved the National Competition Policy Review Report of the Betting Control Act 1954, which included a recommendation to abolish the telephone betting limit of \$200, neither the Hon Max Evans MLC (Minister for Racing and Gaming till December 1999) nor the Hon Norman Moore MLC (Minister for Racing and Gaming from December 1999 to February 2001) acted on the recommendation. In October 2000, however, the Hon Norman Moore reduced the telephone betting limit from \$200 to \$100 with respect to non-metropolitan races.

Changes in the minimum bet levels for telephone and internet betting is a contentious issue which has required careful consideration by the Government. There was no consensus on whether or not existing limits should be reduced or abolished, either on the part of stakeholders in the Western Australian racing industry or at a national level. In the absence of consensus on the part of key racing industry stakeholders, careful consideration had to be given to any decision made by the Government, having regard for the best interests of the racing industry.

Effective from 1 April 2003, the minimum metropolitan betting limit has been reduced from \$200 to \$100 and the minimum country betting limit reduced from \$100 to \$50. From 1 July 2003, it is planned to reduce the minimum metropolitan betting limit from \$100 to \$50 and there would be no minimum country betting limit.

These changes to minimum betting levels are part of a national plan to achieve consistency in all areas of bookmakers' operations. When Racing and Wagering Western Australia, however, comes into operation, it will undertake an assessment of both the impact of that reduction and of any technological or other industry changes with a view to abolishing the limit, possibly from 1 July 2004.

- (e) Not applicable.