

GAMBLING — ADVERTISING

616. Mr I.M. BRITZA to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

Before I ask my question, I acknowledge the year 7 leadership group from Maida Vale Primary School, in the member for Forrestfield's electorate, sitting in the Speaker's gallery.

Will the minister clarify the government's position on gambling advertising and explain how it contributes to the racing industry in Western Australia?

Mr T.K. WALDRON replied:

I thank the member very much for the question. Yesterday, the issue of gambling advertising was raised in the house. It was obvious to me that there was a fair amount of confusion, particularly among members opposite, on the facts of the matter, so I thank the member for the question.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I want to tell members the facts today. In May, a meeting was held between the state and federal governments and concerns were expressed, particularly about the broadcasting at major events of live-odds promotion by prominent gambling operators. The federal government subsequently announced that it would move to ban this form of advertising under its powers to control broadcasting if the industry did not voluntarily move on it. I quote from a joint media statement dated 7 July, from the Premier and me, as follows —

“The most worrying aspect is that children watching sporting events are being bombarded with gambling advertising.

“We don't want young West Australian fans conditioned to think that gambling is an essential part of their favourite sport.

“We want them to go to our stadiums to watch their sporting heroes, not the latest odds being offered by the bookmakers to entice people to place a bet.”

I have that media statement. We are talking about live odds. In support of that, the state government announced its intention to ban the physical advertising of live odds in our sporting arenas on big screens and in-house announcements et cetera. That announcement was to complement the federal ban. Our concern about the promotion of live odds at our football stadiums during sporting events is that children are there and we do not think we should condone that form of advertising. But I want to point out that this has nothing to do with the ability of government trading enterprises, such as the TAB, and Lotterywest for that matter, to promote their services in a publicly responsible way. That is what the advertising campaign the member asked about is doing. That campaign is the first rebranding for 15 years. We should remember that Racing and Wagering Western Australia has two primary roles: to govern and fund the racing industry and to operate the TAB. The operation of the TAB is the primary funding source of the industry. We have 55 not-for-profit racing clubs around the state and \$120 million in stakes to our clubs all comes from this. It generates \$600 million a year in economic value and 17 000 full-time jobs and provides about \$4 million in funds to grassroots sport in Western Australia. It is an operating business and it is very competitive on a national market with interstate competitors, which are targeting our wagering business, so we need to advertise, albeit in a responsible way. I take that point very seriously. To remain competitive, like the Lotteries Commission, that is what we are doing.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I want to move on, as the Speaker wants me to get on with the answer. Members opposite did not understand yesterday that they were attacking the Premier about live odds.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany!

Mr T.K. WALDRON: There is also the generic advertising of a business, which is what I am talking about.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you! Member for Albany, I call you to order for the first time. Minister, will you wind this up, please?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Yes. I have two points to make very quickly, Mr Speaker.

I guarantee to the house that Racing and Wagering Western Australia is acutely aware of its responsibilities and obligations as a wagering operator not to target children. It does not engage in live promotions during sporting

events and it abides by the federal industry code of conduct. Under that national approach, its advertising is generally not at times when children watch television.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Members need to read the national code.

I will finish by saying that without the support of the wagering side of the TAB, the racing industry would collapse and our grassroots sport would be greatly affected. The important point here at the end —

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Does the member for Collie–Preston actually support the racing industry or not? The member does not support it and he does not understand it.

[See paper 1027.]