

BOOKMAKERS, MINIMUM TELEPHONE AND INTERNET BETTING LIMITS, REGULATION

1324. Hon. C.L. Edwardes to the Minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming

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

- (a) was the regulation reviewed in 1998;
- (b) was one of the findings of this review that there was a net public cost;
- (c) did the review recommend the repeal of the regulations;
- (d) prior to you becoming Minister, were all the review recommendations accepted;
- (e) since you have become Minister, have you implemented the recommendations of the review;
- (f) if not, why not;
- (g) will the Minister provide the House with details of the reasons why all the recommendations of the review have not been implemented;
- (h) if not, why not;
- (i) has the Minister, or any of his staff, met with industry representatives and/or their agents, regarding implementation of the recommendations of the review;
- (j) if yes, who were the representatives and/or agents; and
- (k) where was the meeting held?

Mr E.S. RIPPER replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) Yes.
- (d) The National Competition Policy Review recommendation to repeal the regulation imposing the minimum telephone betting limit of \$200, was approved by the Court Government in March 1999.
- (e) No, however, the member must appreciate that 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.

- (f)-(g) 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.

- (h) Not applicable.

- (i) Since becoming Minister for Racing and Gaming in February 2001, the Minister and his staff have, on numerous occasions, met with many members of the racing industry (including bookmakers) and club and association representatives (including the Western Australian Bookmakers' Association) to discuss the many issues confronting the Western Australian racing industry, which on some occasions has included the issue of minimum bookmaker telephone/internet betting limits.
 - (j)-(k) Since February 2001, the Minister and his staff have met on far too many occasions with far too many members of, and representatives from, the racing industry to provide specific details.
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