

INTERNET GAMBLING, LABOR'S POSITION

291. Mr BAKER to the Premier:

I refer to the federal Labor Party's decision in the Senate to oppose legislation banning Internet gambling, saying that it is the responsibility of the States. Does the Government support Labor's refusal to ban Internet gambling; and, if not, is the Premier aware of the state Labor Party's position on this issue?

Mr COURT replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The information I have received from the Minister for Racing and Gaming is that federal Labor's decision to block the proposed moratorium on Internet gaming shows that it is soft on gambling. We have supported the moratorium because we are concerned about access to the Internet and the harm that can be done by casino-type -

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: Mr Speaker, this answer is not a joke. We supported the moratorium because we were concerned about access to the Internet and the harm that can be done by casino-type Internet gaming, where people can bet using their credit card and they can lose their home from their home. To this point, Western Australia does not have the same social consequences that flow from gambling as do other States, because of our refusal to allow the spread of poker machines. The decision in the Senate led by the federal Labor Party now puts this low level of problem gambling in Western Australia at risk. Our position on this issue is clear; federal Labor's position is also clear. We do not support federal Labor's position and we will be interested in what the state Labor Party has to say about this.