

TAB (DISPOSAL) BILL 2019

**430. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Treasurer:**

I refer to the Treasurer's comments in this place last night regarding the TAB (Disposal) Bill 2019, and I quote —

... I cannot tolerate any changes to the legislation because that is against the agreement I have with industry ...

- (1) Is this agreement with industry in writing?
- (2) If yes, will the Treasurer table that agreement?

**Mr B.S. WYATT replied:**

- (1)–(2) Yes it is. I read the letter into Parliament last night—perhaps the Leader of the Nationals WA missed it. When we go back to consideration in detail I will read it out again. The reason I said that is that it has been 18 months of effort to get to the position by which we have the industry wanting the sale of the TAB. It sees that the status quo, which the National Party is so desperate to maintain, is not delivering for it; it is not a sustainable way forward for TAB agents, trainers, jockeys—the industry. The package that we have developed, including the point-of-consumption tax, is delivering two things. Firstly, it delivers the ongoing revenue source that will underwrite the industry going into the future, and importantly 35 per cent of those sale proceeds. Again, this was part of our public consultation document with the racing sector, including regional Western Australia, of 35 per cent. The former minister, Hon Colin Holt, in his WA racing group identified an infrastructure fund that required about \$100 million. That is what 35 per cent will provide. As the member for South Perth highlighted during debate, the \$100 million at the time, when the former Premier Colin Barnett was engaged with industry, was then about 20 per cent of the sale proceeds, and as the member for Warren–Blackwood highlighted yesterday, if it had sold TAB five years ago, it would have got a lot more money for it. The reason the TAB was not sold, and I made this point last night, was that the uncertainty that was created —

**Mr D.T. Redman:** You had such a good opposition campaign.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** No.

The problem we had is that we all recall the relationship between the Liberal side of the former government and the Nationals side of the former government.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** We also recall you being against it.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood!

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** No. I also opposed the former government's three rounds of land tax increase, but it shoved it through Parliament without too much effort. But when it came to the TAB, for some reason it could not bring anything on because we opposed it. The member for Warren–Blackwood raises a bizarre argument. He says that he wanted to sell the TAB, but as the member for Warren–Blackwood said, if it had sold it five years ago, it would have got heaps more money. The industry would have got way more money and would have been way better off, but it did not. Again, I turn around to pick up the mess of the former government, wherever I seem to do it, and this is the latest one. As I said, my priority as Treasurer is the point-of-consumption tax, because I thought that was the most significant reform; we had large multinationals taking economic value out of the state and not paying tax. We have now implemented that reform. We have the most generous revenue-sharing arrangement in the country, whereby 30 per cent of that revenue goes to industry. Yes, when it comes to the other component, I am getting nothing but obstacles from the National Party and less so from the Liberal Party. I think the Liberal Party supports it, but the National Party's position is ultimately: "If you really support the sector, you'll back this in." The reason I make the point is that I will not be tolerating any amendments, because this has been 18 months in the making. I look around at some of my colleagues and I suspect I have tested their patience with some of my policy agendas; POC was the key. I want to make it very clear that if this bill is amended, if this falls over in the upper house and the opposition seeks to amend it in the upper house, that is it for the bill and it will be dealt with again in three years' time after an election, and, no doubt, after another period of review and consultation. In three years the industry will be in a much worse position than it is now and the value of the TAB will be much less than it is now. , Because of the delay of the five years in which the former government could not land a position on what to do with the TAB, we find ourselves in this position.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** They still can't.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** It still cannot, that is right. But I am hoping it supports the position that we have come to. This legislation is supported by industry. I think it is supported by most Liberals; there are not many of them around these days, but I think most Liberals generally support it. This is clearly the best outcome for the industry and government. Because industry gets 35 per cent, and the rest of taxpayers who own the asset get 65 per cent, it means we can get

on and start work on the replacement hospital for King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. As I pointed out yesterday and as the Minister for Health has pointed out, for 20 years governments have been saying that it is a priority to replace King Eddy's. Why has it not happened? It has not been funded. If we start funding it, it will bring forward that work and it will happen. I emphasise that about 12 per cent of all births at King Eddy's each year are of regional Western Australians. I do not think the National Party should inflict on those regional Western Australians a delay in replacing the hospital as we continue to use, let us be honest, the clapped-out hospital that it is now. Let us get on for regional and metropolitan Western Australians and get that hospital built.