

RUGBY WORLD CUP, LIQUOR LICENCES

1163. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

Further to my earlier question without notice, is the minister concerned about the inflexible, cumbersome and costly liquor laws that have led to the ridiculous situation that most hotels will be forced to close just as the crowds from the Rugby World Cup matches in Perth will probably leave their games in search of entertainment and a drink? If so, does the minister intend to introduce an amendment to the liquor laws, along the lines of an amendment made by the New South Wales Government, enabling a general exemption to be granted for events of state, national or international importance?

The PRESIDENT: The member managed to score on a leading and argumentative question, and a range of other matters!

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS replied:

It is a most interesting question. The honourable member raised a very important issue in his earlier question and has developed the matter further in his second question.

It is open to a hotel to apply for an extended trading permit during the Rugby World Cup events. The application need not necessarily be expensive, although I am aware that it can be expensive, depending on how far the process goes and the initial reaction to the application. However, hotels that are likely to be affected by crowds interested in rugby will have an opportunity to apply for an extended trading permit. In fact, all hotels will have that opportunity. There is no reason to believe that a hotel will not be granted an extended trading permit. However, the issue is whether extended trading permits should be granted across the whole of the State. I have said that it is not in my capacity to do anything about the Liquor Licensing Act. However, I will note how the world develops closer to that particular rugby event and the work that will be required to get legislation through the Parliament. The honourable member has raised a very interesting point that will be appropriately considered.