

BOOKMAKERS, TELEPHONE BETTING LIMITS

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

- (1) Does the minister favour the removal of telephone betting limits currently imposed on bookmakers in Western Australia?
- (2) If yes, when will the minister introduce legislation to remove this unfair restriction on local bookmaking activities?
- (3) If not, what are the minister's reasons for opposing this change?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS replied:

- (1)-(3) I thank the member for his question. I note that the terms of his question show that he has adopted a particular view with regard to telephone betting limits. No doubt he has taken that stance on behalf of the Opposition. My view on telephone betting limits for bookmakers is that it would be preferable if a uniform approach were taken across the Commonwealth of Australia. Currently, a number of different limits apply throughout the various jurisdictions in Australia. Last week I attended a racing ministers conference and it considered a number of issues. In particular, it considered the issue of cross-border betting, which is a very real threat to the Australasian, New South Wales and Victorian racing industries. I am very concerned that it may become a threat to Western Australia. In that context, the ministers agreed that, as a matter of principle, a product fee should be charged on those who engage in cross-border betting. That issue has been referred to the industry and the codes with a view to the codes coming up with their preferred method to best dispose of the matter, hopefully once and for all. It is envisaged that that will be dealt with at the next proposed racing ministers meeting in February. I envisage that the issue of telephone betting can be addressed at that time. If, at that stage, a uniform telephone betting regime cannot occur throughout the Commonwealth, with some reluctance I will give further consideration to whether and to what extent the telephone betting limits in Western Australia should be changed. In that regard the member referred to legislation. Certainly it requires changes to legislation, but that will be done by way of regulation.