

HARNESS RACING INDUSTRY

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

- (1) Is the minister aware of widespread concern in the harness racing community about the regulation and control of the pre-race administration of alkalinising agents, notably sodium bicarbonate, to horses via stomach tube?
- (2) Does the minister consider that the penalty process is draconian and involves a lack of natural justice?
- (3) As these rules are administered under the auspices of the Western Australian Trotting Association Act 1946, does the minister intend to take action to address this issue?

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2)-(3) The Government has received a report from the racing review that was set up by Hon Norman Moore. I am consulting with a number of interested people, including many people in the harness racing industry, and in due course I will bring recommendations to Cabinet. Cabinet will then make a decision about what will occur in the racing industry as a whole, which includes the harness racing industry. When that decision is made, it is anticipated that many of the concerns raised by members of the harness racing industry, in particular about the matter that the member has raised, will be addressed. It is premature for me to comment further at this stage, because consultation is occurring. Following that consultation, I will bring recommendations to Cabinet, and Cabinet will then deliberate and make a decision. If Cabinet decides to move in a particular direction, these matters will, no doubt, be the subject of legislation in due course.