

TAB — PRIVATISATION

172. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

Before I ask my question, I would like to welcome students and teachers from Fairview Primary School who are in the public gallery—it is one of the best schools in Australia, without doubt!

I refer to the minister's commitments to the house on 20 February that the government's position is that the TAB will not be sold.

- (1) Is that still the government's position?
- (2) Has the minister been advised that under the report on privatisation given to the Premier, it is now up for sale?

Mr T.K. WALDRON replied:

I thank the member for the question—I think I already answered it when he asked me last time.

- (1)–(2) I am on the record as saying that as the minister I would only ever consider the privatisation of the TAB if it was in the best interests of the racing industry. Obviously the government will look at everything, and if it wants to privatise certain parts, it will sell certain things.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I said “if our government”, which I am part of, will look at that. I do not expect the TAB to be one of those; however, I have spoken with Racing and Wagering Western Australia —

Several members interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I actually have ongoing discussions with Racing and Wagering WA, which represents the industry. If RWWA thought it was in the best interests, it would come to me and tell me that. I do not think it is in the best interests of the racing industry—in fact, I do not think it is in the best interests of the state—to privatise the TAB at this stage. That is what I have said, and that is my position. Obviously, as time goes on, governments of the future can always reconsider —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: The one point I will make about the TAB is that WA is the only state to have our TAB linked with our racing industry through Racing and Wagering WA. It is a system that works really well; it is operating better than the equivalents in all other states. When I go to racing ministers' meetings, many other states would like to be us because the TAB sustains our industry. The TAB is performing very well, and I do not support its privatisation.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr T.K. WALDRON: As I said, RWWA has given me an undertaking as minister that if it felt at the time that privatisation was in the best interests of the racing industry, it would let me know that. I do not think it is in the best interests of the racing industry at this time; therefore, I do not see it being privatised at this stage.