

The Responsible Gambling Advisory Committee's role is to provide high-level policy advice and comment on emerging economic issues associated with gambling and is comprised of members from community organisations, relevant government agencies and the gambling industry. The committee was not initially consulted on this change because it is basically not designed to consider operational issues and changes within casinos. But certainly I welcome the change to the policy. This is an issue which I believe should go to cabinet and in future—

CHAIR: Order! The minister's time has expired.

Mr STEVENS: I refer you to page 2-14 of the Service Delivery Statement and the reference to racing control bodies. Can the minister confirm he endorses the greyhound control board's decision to abolish the Gold Coast racing club considering that it has received \$10 million compensation for the demise of the Gold Coast racing facility at Parklands on the Gold Coast?

Mr LAWLOR: Let me correct the misconception that it was the Gold Coast greyhound club that received \$10 million. That is not the case at all.

Mr STEVENS: I never said that.

Mr LAWLOR: I misheard, sorry. The \$10 million was paid as compensation to the greyhound control board. In mid-2008 the Gold Coast Greyhound Racing Club was required to vacate the Parklands site due to the development of the Gold Coast Hospital, as you are aware. Since that time the club has been unable to race as it does not have a venue. As the club was only a tenant at Parklands, there was no legal obligation on the government to provide compensation to either the club or the greyhound control body. However, the government has committed \$10 million to Greyhounds Queensland as compensation to the greyhound code for the loss of this important TAB racing venue.

As the control body for greyhound racing, Greyhounds Queensland has a responsibility under the Racing Act 2002 to make decisions about and allocating funds for venue development and other infrastructure relevant to the code. The \$10 million compensation is conditional upon Greyhounds Queensland applying the funds to the development of a new greyhound racing facility. As is publicly known, Greyhounds Queensland has developed a proposal to develop a new stand-alone greyhound racing facility at Logan. The Logan site is crown land and the government has indicated to Greyhounds Queensland that, should its final investigation show that the Logan proposal is viable, the government is willing to consider transferring the land at no cost to the code. This provides the Logan proposal with a major advantage over any possible alternative sites that would need to be purchased.

The Gold Coast Greyhound Racing Club has identified possible alternative sites, and discussions between the club and its control body are continuing. I have met with both the Gold Coast Greyhound Racing Club and the greyhound control board to discuss these issues. Greyhounds Queensland has recently issued a show-cause notice to the Gold Coast Greyhound Racing Club as to why the club's licence should not be renewed. The club has until 7 August 2009 to provide submissions to the control body. As a show-cause notice has been issued and we must follow due process, it is inappropriate for me to comment on this matter.

The loss of the use of the Parklands site is no doubt perceived as a blow by the club. However, I believe the \$10 million compensation will provide the control body and the code an opportunity to develop a new racing facility that will help secure the code's future. It is also no secret that the greyhound code wants to leave the Albion Park facility and establish its own stand-alone racing venue. Discussions are already underway and both parties have indicated a willingness to resolve this issue. Whilst the loss of Parklands is no doubt perceived as a blow by many, I believe the government's compensation of \$10 million will provide the code with an opportunity to develop a new racing facility.

Mr STEVENS: Minister, I refer you to page 2-14 of the Service Delivery Statement and the reference to racing control bodies. Can the minister confirm that the process to identify and supply four candidates for election to the Queensland Racing board was flawed? What steps will he be taking to remedy the situation?

Mr LAWLOR: Once again, here we go with you making requests for the minister to intervene—

Mr STEVENS: No, no—the process.

CHAIR: Order! Member, you have asked your question. The minister will now answer.

Mr LAWLOR:—in the process which is in place for the selection of board members of Queensland Racing. I have said before that I have no ability to do that. The process, as I understood it, called for nominations. I think about 26 nominations were received. An independent assessment was made of those 26 nominations and they were reduced to four. There were some surprises, I think you would agree—surprises to you and surprises to me, but we were not involved in that process and nor should we have been. There will now be an election, I think in November, to select two of those four that are short-listed to go on to the board of Queensland Racing.

Starting in April this year, with public advertising calling for nominations, Queensland Racing commenced the process for the selection and appointment of two directors to the board whose positions will fall vacant at the company's next annual general meeting. I understand that this selection process, which is in accordance with the company's constitution, is on track to be finalised at the company's annual general meeting to be held in November 2009.

Decisions on the process to be followed for the selection and appointment of directors to Queensland Racing are not matters which the minister has any involvement in. These elections are conducted in accordance with the requirements of Queensland Racing's constitution and the requirements of the Corporations Act 2001. In fact, should a minister attempt to influence or interfere in the appointment of any director, they may well end up being prosecuted for official misconduct, and I am sure you would not want to see that happen to me.

Mr STEVENS: I agree with that.

Mr LAWLOR: Without mentioning names, I think that probably both you and I are concerned about one particular person.

Mr STEVENS: No.

Mr LAWLOR: Well, I was. Again, whilst I might be concerned about it, I do not have any control over it and I will not interfere in the process.

Mr STEVENS: As long as it is lawful.

Mr LAWLOR: On that point, I think you are probably alluding to the issue of people standing on committees nominating and when they are actually appointed they are not allowed to be members of the committee. My understanding is that they will not be members of the committee when they are appointed, whoever the two are. That will then satisfy the requirements of the constitution.

Mr STEVENS: I refer you to page 2-17 of the Service Delivery Statement and your answer to question on notice No. 6, where you state—

Where an application relates to a locality that has been declared an alcohol restricted area, the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation must have regard to the health and social circumstances that led to the declaration in the first place.

Is this not the same entity that declares an alcohol restricted area in the first instance? It quite clearly is a case of Caesar judging Caesar.

CHAIR: Unfortunately, Minister, the time for this session has expired. It is now time for questions from government members. I refer you to page 2-33 of the Service Delivery Statement in relation to licensing applications. In light of these, what measures are you taking as minister to promote harm minimisation in the community?

Mr LAWLOR: Thank you for the question. Minimising harm from the misuse and abuse of alcohol, particularly by young people, remains a high priority of the Queensland government. For some years the government has been actively working to reduce alcohol abuse via a range of strategies, including a 3 am lockout, state-wide advertising bans on the availability, promotion and sale price of liquor for consumption on licensed premises, and tougher licence conditions, especially for those licensees trading during the high-risk early morning hours.

Further, on 10 September 2008 parliament passed a package of harm minimisation initiatives to encourage the responsible supply and consumption of alcohol. Queensland liquor legislation now prioritises harm minimisation as the first object of the Liquor Act and legislates proactive initiatives to minimise harm from the sale and supply of alcohol. The legislative reforms restrict the trading hours of licensed premises. Ordinary trading hours are now 10 am to midnight for all venues, with limited exceptions for facilities such as casinos and some airports. Approval to trade past midnight—which is higher risk—is still available but is subject to more stringent requirements.

On 20 July the Premier announced that a Queensland-wide parliamentary inquiry would be conducted into alcohol related violence and that the government would work with industry to replace glasses with plastic cups in higher risk venues, including hotels, by the end of the year. The responsible management of licensed venues in responsible service of alcohol training for licensees and managers and responsible service of alcohol training for most employees has encouraged responsible industry practices by increasing awareness of the liquor laws and ensuring the safety of patrons in and around licensed premises. Training for all managers and employees of licensed premises is now mandatory. To further reduce the risks associated with the sale and supply of alcohol, it is now mandatory for all licensees to complete a risk assessment management plan and a community impact statement.

All of these measures are supported by a social marketing community education campaign aimed at changing the drinking culture in Queensland. The Queensland government liquor reform has seen Queensland lead the way with the most significant alcohol reform program in Australia.

Mr PITT: Minister, I refer you to page 2-32 of the Service Delivery Statements in relation to compliance. In light of the recent spate of alcohol related violent incidents, particularly among young people, what government funded programs or initiatives have you introduced as minister to promote responsible drinking in young people and curb problem drinking?