



Speech by

PETER WELLINGTON

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard 17 August 1999

INTERACTIVE GAMBLING (PLAYER PROTECTION) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—IND) (12.14 a.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Amendment Bill that has been introduced by the Premier and acting Treasurer. The thrust of this Bill is to ensure that politicians, their spouses, their children or their staff who have been referred to in this House and in the media are prevented from gaining beneficial interest through the awarding of the State's first Internet gaming licence to Gocorp.

Whilst some may argue that the Bill goes overboard and is contrary to a fundamental legislative principle, I believe it is reasonable, bearing in mind the matters that have been recently raised and referred to in the media and this House surrounding the issue of this Internet gaming licence. While members of the Opposition have focused much of their attention today on the interpretations of sections 44 and 48 of the Act, I believe that these members do not appear to have yet recognised the substance of section 45 of the Act, which gives the Minister the power to make the licence provider show cause why the licence in question should not be suspended or cancelled.

Whether we agree with gambling or not, there is a fundamental legal principle that, before one suspends a person's licence, one gives them an opportunity to show cause why that licence should not be suspended. I will repeat that again: there is a fundamental legal principle that, before one suspends a person's licence, one gives them an opportunity to show cause why that licence should not be suspended.

A lot has already been said in this Chamber tonight, and I also do not propose to be repetitious. Suffice it to say that I share the Premier's sentiments regarding the requirement for politicians to be people of integrity and to refrain from using their positions of privilege to feather their own nests. That it is perceived by Queenslanders that members of the Labor Party and, in particular, a member of this House, used their positions of privilege to lobby on behalf of a company in which they were shareholders or had an interest I find particularly reprehensible and, in light of this, I am prepared to support the Bill being finalised as soon as possible.

I believe that this Bill will go a long way towards restoring the faith of Queenslanders in this Government—faith that I believe has been severely dented over recent weeks because of perceived cronyism surrounding the issuing of this licence.
