



Speech by

Hon. Peter Lawlor

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

Hansard Wednesday, 3 June 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Responsible Gambling

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (10.19 am): Last year the Premier announced a range of responsible gambling initiatives, one of which was an investigation into precommitment card based machine gaming. The trials undertaken at Sandgate and Redcliffe RSLs have now concluded and the two systems trialled have been approved for a voluntary rollout.

With the member for Sandgate, Vicky Darling, last week I attended a demonstration at the Sandgate RSL, which is in her electorate. The new cashless gaming technology allows patrons to set limits on the money or time spent using electronic gaming machines, providing greater control to players. The trials showed promising results, with some patrons reporting a spend reduction of up to \$25 a day. The gaming machine spend for players, regardless of whether or not they set a limit, decreased by 5.2 per cent. The evaluation of the card based trials indicates overall success as a harm minimisation measure for industry, players and the government.

The Queensland government is leading the way in the prevention of problem gambling in Queensland. Whilst less than half a per cent of the Queensland population can be identified as a problem gambler, one problem gambler is one problem gambler too many for the Bligh government. The impact problem gambling has on families and communities makes it an important area for the government to address, even more so in tough economic times such as these.

As part of Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland, the Bligh government is committed to building a safe and caring community. The wider investigation into card based gaming is one of many harm minimisation initiatives announced by Premier Anna Bligh last year which forms part of the Queensland government's Responsible Gambling Strategy. Others include the introduction of mandatory responsible service of gambling training, a moratorium on electronic gaming machine increases, a review of ATM withdrawal limits in licensed gaming venues, a ban on pre-10 am gaming operating hours and wider investigations into precommitment card based machine gaming.

I am happy to report that the evaluation of the card based gaming trials demonstrated an overall support from both players and industry alike. The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing has approved both systems for implementation in gaming venues on a voluntary basis. The Bligh government is prepared to make the tough decisions in these tough times.