




Speech By  
**Stephen Andrew**

**MEMBER FOR MIRANI**

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## **CASINO CONTROL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (6.55 pm): I rise to speak on the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill was introduced in response to concerns about the integrity and accountability of the state's casino sector. These concerns were stoked by allegations of money laundering, criminal infiltration and other integrity issues, particularly in relation to the Star Entertainment Group Ltd, which operates the Treasury Brisbane casino and the Star Gold Coast casino. Star is also a key backer of the \$3.6 billion Queen's Wharf casino development still under construction.

The bill follows the initial reforms enacted by the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2022 in October 2022. In July 2022, the former attorney-general appointed the Hon. Robert Gotterson AO, KC to conduct an external review of the Queensland operations of the Star Entertainment Group Ltd. In addition to inquiring into the operations of Star's Queensland properties and providing advice to inform government's concurrent suitability investigations into Star Entertainment Group Ltd, Mr Gotterson was tasked with considering what improvements might enhance the integrity of casinos. Mr Gotterson made 12 recommendations for reforms to the legislation, all of which the government has undertaken to implement.

The bill provides a regulation-making power that will allow the details of these technology-driven reforms to be defined and refined in accordance with best practice harm minimisation. The bill introduces a requirement for casino operators to observe a mandatory code of conduct, the details of which are to be prescribed by regulation after the bill passes. The code, or so we are told, will deal with the appropriate conduct of casino operations and the implementation of appropriate practices, systems and procedures relating to the governance, accountability and integrity of casino operators, all of which should have been included in the primary legislation.

The bill also amends the Casino Control Act to provide for periodic cost-recoverable reviews into each casino licence at intervals of not more than five years, unless extended to a maximum of seven years. According to the government, these reviews will cover the suitability of the casino entities associated with the casino licence, the compliance of each casino entity with casino legislation, the operation of the casino and whether it is in the public interest that the casino licence remains in force. However, once again, the details on this will not be known until enacted by regulation once the bill has been assented to.

Significantly, the bill also creates the framework for Mr Gotterson's recommendation that mandatory carded play be implemented in Queensland casinos, accompanied by mandatory precommitment along with restrictions on the use of cash. The bill will also restrict casinos from accepting more than a prescribed amount of cash from a person for gambling transactions within a 24-hour period. Mr Gotterson recommended a \$1,000 limit, noting that the limit relates only to the use of cash and is separate from any default expenditure limit as set under the provisions relating to mandatory precommitment. These types of government-run income management programs set a

dangerous precedent for the future of privacy and financial autonomy in Queensland. Such schemes always end up with governments implementing the most coercive possible measures for an ever-expanding number of people, irrespective of their behaviour and regardless of consequent harm.

I also have serious misgivings around the threat to ordinary people's privacy posed by this bill. The Office of the Information Commissioner expressed similar concerns over the bill's privacy implications. The Information Commissioner also noted that the Queensland parliament is presently dealing with a number of bills with significant privacy issues around some of their provisions. As the OIC points out, clause 43 of the bill allows for regulations mandating carded play which will require individuals to gamble by way of a card linked to their identity against which all their carded play data will be monitored, stored and shared for research purposes.

According to the commissioner, this obligation for cashless carded play has direct and serious privacy impacts. Restricting how a person can access and where they can spend their own money interferes with a person's right to personal autonomy and, therefore, their right to a private life. It also impacts on how a person is able to conduct their private life and marks a sinister extension of government regulation into the private and family lives of persons engaging in perfectly lawful activities. The government has also failed to clearly demonstrate that these cashless gambling measures are the only means by which its objective might be achieved. The language of the Human Rights Act is very clear, as is the concept of proportionality. We need a solid evidence base before we agree to run another poorly designed social policy experiment on the people of Queensland.