

Question on Notice

No. 106

Asked on Thursday 24 February 2005

Mr Fenlon MP asked the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (**Mr Pitt**) -

“Does the Department of Communities provide support to people with a gambling problem?”

ANSWER:

- The Department of Communities plays a central role in the delivery of support services to people who are experiencing problems with gambling. As part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with Queensland Treasury, the Department of Communities receives \$3.67M per annum over three years (2002-2005) from Queensland Treasury to administer funds to the Gambling Help services and to ensure the continuous improvement of the Gambling Help service system. The provision of the Gambling Help service system by the Department of Communities is a part of the Queensland Government's Responsible Gambling Strategy.
- The Department of Communities currently funds 13 regional Gambling Help counselling and support services and a 24-hour Gambling Help-Line telephone crisis counselling service. These Gambling Help services were designed to ensure Queenslanders who experience difficulties associated with gambling can access effective, culturally appropriate services, seven days a week.
- The thirteen regional Gambling Help services are located in Brisbane, Caboolture and Redcliffe Peninsula, Cairns and Tablelands, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Mackay and Whitsunday, Mt Isa, Rockhampton and Central Queensland, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and South West, Townsville and Hinterland, and Wide Bay and Burnett. The Gambling Help services are auspiced by Relationships Australia, Interlock, Lifeline and Centacare.
- The Gambling Help services are primarily funded to provide immediate response services including financial, addictions and relationships counselling, in either face to face or telephone settings, for individuals, families or groups who experience difficulties associated with gambling. Other services provided include assistance with self-exclusion from gambling venues, and information about and referral to other service providers including the 24-hour Gambling Help-Line service for crisis counselling and the Queensland Health-funded residential Gambling Help service. Gambling Help services also provide a range of community education activities within their regional locations. This includes targeted training to local community and health services to assist them to better meet the support needs of their own clients.
- The Gambling Help-Line, a 24 hour/7 day a week telephone service, is funded to provide telephone counselling, information and referral services to people experiencing problems related to gambling.
- Additionally, the Department of Communities also funds the Gambling Help Network to provide opportunities for training, relationship building, professional development and continuous improvement of the Gambling Help services across the State.