

Question on Notice

No. 921

Asked on 21 August 2024

MR T NICHOLLS ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND MINISTER FOR PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (HON Y D'ATH)

QUESTION:

With reference to 24 November last year when the Attorney-General released a media statement about the extension of disciplinary action for Star which stated, 'A remediation plan for The Star comprising of more than 100 initiatives across key areas of casino management and operations has been approved.'—

Will the Attorney-General advise (a) how many of these initiatives have been implemented to date and (b) is there a target for when all will be completed?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government has acted decisively in bringing about legislative reform to hold casino operators to account and ensure they operate lawfully and in a way that enhances integrity and minimises the potential for harm.

In 2022, this Government enhanced regulatory scrutiny by providing the Queensland regulator greater visibility over casino operations through enhanced information-gathering powers and obligations on casino operators to self-report breaches and actively cooperate with the regulator.

In October 2023, building upon these 2022 reforms, this Government introduced substantial legislative amendments to the *Casino Control Act 1982* that reflect some of the most significant steps taken to reduce gambling harm in any jurisdiction in this country.

Reforms introduced by the Government have enhanced inquiry powers, hold officers personally liable for failing to exercise due diligence, require casino entities to be reviewed every five years, and significantly increased the maximum penalties for more than 60 offences. The Government has also introduced a supervision levy to ensure that the regulator is appropriately resourced to fulfil its functions and that casinos contribute to the enhancement of gambling harm minimisation programs across Queensland.

Legislative changes introduced by this Government also provide for mandatory carded play at Queensland casinos, including the collection and use of player card information; restrictions on the use of cash; mandatory pre-commitment and breaks in play; and a mandatory code of conduct for casino operators. The Star is progressing these complex system wide technology reforms and the Queensland and NSW casino regulators are coordinating their efforts to ensure implementation occurs as soon and as safely as possible.

The Special Manager, Mr Nicholas Weeks, was appointed in December 2022 to monitor compliance and oversee The Star's activities against a government-approved remediation plan designed to ensure institutional change and avoid a repeat of the unacceptable conduct that led to the Queensland Government's disciplinary action.

The remediation plan covers over 100 initiatives, comprising over 600 milestone deliverables across 15 workstreams to direct The Star's group-wide management and operations towards a return to suitability.

At the request of the Government, an update on progress against this plan was published by The Star on 12 July 2024.

To provide further update, as at 20 August 2024, The Star reported 336 milestone deliverables as complete across 70 initiatives. Of these, 231 (69 per cent) had been independently assured.

The robust regulatory oversight of The Star's progress will continue, with The Star's remediation subject to supervision by both the Queensland regulator and the Special Manager, Mr Nicholas Weeks. The regulator has 16 compliance officers located at The Star's Queensland casinos, monitoring operations and compliance. In 2023-24, 271 audits and 37 investigations were undertaken by the regulator in relation to The Star in Queensland to further assess the robustness of their operations.

Deliverables under The Star's approved remediation plan extend into 2026. The remediation plan now also applies to The Star Brisbane.

In his report into the 2024 Inquiry into The Star Pty Ltd, Mr Adam Bell SC noted the remediation plan was clearly the product of a great deal of hard work and high-level thought and reflection to address fundamental problems identified in previous reviews and reports.

However, Mr Bell points to a number of imperfections in the plan and endorses the proposal by The Star for a reset of the remediation plan. The Special Manager will consider any proposed amendments to the remediation plan prior to necessary Government approvals.