

Legislative Council

Hansard

Tuesday 2 December 2025

The President, Mr Farrell, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

[excerpt...]

MOTION

Gambling Advertising at State-Owned and State-Funded Venues

[5.07 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, thank you, and thank you to the members who have made contributions on the motion. I appreciate that very much. I will sum up relatively briefly, I suspect. I appreciate the member for Mersey raising that this is an attack on sport. No, far from it. It's actually to make sport a family-friendly, enjoyable and safe opportunity, at least when people go to experience it in person in our state, at state-owned/funded venues. I agree it's a positive move forward for Tasmania and for sport in this state.

I appreciate the member for Hobart's comments dispelling that myth around personal responsibility being anything to do with gambling addiction, and I share her concerns around that platform mentality in relation to venues, and how that can actually be insidiously used in conjunction with the dominance of gambling sponsorship and presence in those venues, very much so.

To be clear: I'm not surprised that the neither the government nor the Labor Party are supporting the motion. It's hardly surprising because they're very reluctant to take responsibility and to make any steps towards leadership on this issue, which is a shame for our state, and certainly a shame for vulnerable people in this state who are currently suffering under gambling addiction, and are not being assisted in any way, shape or form by the policies taken forward by either of the major parties.

The government and the Labor Party's push to say this is a federal responsibility is quite simply shirking the leadership and responsibility that can and should be taken at a state level. We absolutely do have the opportunity to act, and we could, and that would provide a good national light on the hill for others to follow. We are a perfectly sized state to do that and we could implement this in nuanced ways that suit our state. This is not a prescriptive motion; this is not a motion that comes into immediate effect. It is a motion that calls on action over time and, of course, the details of that could be worked out with good intent, were it to be taken up by the government of the day and supported by the parliament and the opposition of the day.

Yes, of course, as pointed out by the member for Pembroke on behalf of the Labor Party, this does not affect TV advertising or the mainland. No, it does not. This is not a panacea motion and never claimed to be so. This is a motion that says here is something we could take responsibility for and improve and suggests that we do that. Of course we need to take actions in other areas, and continue to look for opportunities to reform, with a positive public-health lens, other aspects of the drivers of gambling harm, things that do happen on TV or on the mainland.

Doing one thing does not stop us doing another, and it is a really typical strategy of people who argue against positive reform on any gambling matter. It is a typical strategy to say, oh, this does not fix everything, what about this thing over here and that thing over there? What about fixing those? Well, sure, let's have those conversations as well, but why would it stop us taking an action, a clear action we could take to make positive improvement and to better protect people in our community who are at risk now, who are being harmed now?

Just to be clear and remind people in this Chamber, because it is a while since we spoke about the gambling matter in detail, just to remind people, because it did come up about the impact of this in a social sense, for research tells us very clearly: for every person with a gambling addiction, there are five to ten people around them, so let's say on average seven, just to be on the conservative side, seven people around them being directly impacted by that addiction too. It is friends, family members, employers, neighbours, community members. That is how pervasive this addiction is.

I am absolutely going to take exception at the assertion in the government contribution that the member for McIntyre, as leader of government business, brought to this place, that the comparison with tobacco is not relevant. That is an utter furphy to suggest - and the rationale being provided by the government to say we cannot compare tobacco to gambling, is to say that in terms of the product of tobacco, if you use it as intended, it is likely to be harmful it could easily kill you. We know that. The reality is when it comes to gambling, when you use the product as intended, it is likely to end up - or we know from research, actually, for a certain proportion of people, it will end up leading to an addiction which will harm that person and, say, seven people around them in their life.

We know that for sure, for example, on pokies for a start. I'm not as immediately familiar with the data on other forms of gambling addiction, but certainly for pokies, if you use a poker machine as intended, one in six people who do that will become addicted to poker machines. That is a guarantee. That is not anything to do with personal responsibility. It is not anything to do with using the product in any way that is not intended. It is a recreational user of the machine. You sit down regularly in front of it to use it as intended; one in six people will develop an addiction, full stop.

So how dare there be a suggestion that somehow gambling addiction is the responsibility of the person for not using the product responsibly, or appropriately, or as intended? That is rubbish. It is a lie. It is a myth, and it should not be perpetrated in this place by a government who is responsible and cares about the community, so I hope that we never hear such a suggestion again. Although the Member for Pembroke suggested that I had somehow mentioned the words problem gambling in my motion, I have not. I never used that term because it is not an appropriate term. It is a term that is used in research to categorise, but it is not a concept that is accepted by anyone who operates in this space as being appropriate. If you use the term problem gambling, you are blaming the person for their addiction. That is not valid. It is not accurate and it is not appropriate to use it as a term.

I am all for using targeted, evidence-based approaches when it comes to addressing gambling harm. Let's do that. That's what we were intending to do in this state when we had a pokies card planned, it's been abandoned by the government and never supported by the opposition. How dare they suggest that they are interested in targeted evidence-based approaches? They're not.

This is a targeted approach. This is not saying we're trying to fix everything. This is saying we have sporting venues that are the responsibility of our state, we know that exposure to gambling ads in those sporting venues puts children in our community at risk. We know it

inextricably normalises gambling when it comes to those children's experience of sport. It joins those two things together in an unhealthy way that is making them more likely to be at risk of gambling harm and developing a gambling addiction and probably at a relatively young age. That's a very targeted thing to do. Here's our venues. We're going to decide not to put gambling advertising in them. It's a pretty straightforward idea, supported by evidence. Its targeted evidence-based approach to reducing harm in our community. Again, anybody who suggests that they're interested in targeted, evidence-based approaches can actually comfortably support this motion.

That largely covers my points. There were some questions from the member for Pembroke on the implementation of this, those are not questions that need to be answered in relation to this motion. In the sense that this motion provides for an opportunity for the government to take an approach over a period of time to implement the outcome, which is the ban on advertising in state owned venues.

How the government goes about doing that, the details of how that occurs is entirely then within the policy remit of the government. This is calling for a particular broad action and outcome. The implementation of it can be flexibly addressed by a receptive government, if we had one when it comes to it.

I'll wrap up, I know we've got a long day. I appreciate members engagement with this motion. It's always a challenge when we ask people in this place to support a motion relating to an industry that has such a grip on our political environment. But still, I encourage members to support this motion.

Motion agreed to.