

STATE LOTTERIES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

15 March 2007

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 13 March.)

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD: I rise to indicate Family First support for the second reading of the bill. I note the comments made by the Hon. Stephen Wade. As always, he has brought some thought-provoking and well-researched information to the chamber for our consideration. However, in the end, Family First sees problem gambling in our society as a very significant issue and, as a general rule, we support any measure taken that will in any way reduce the potential harm done by problem gambling. I take the point made by the Hon. Stephen Wade that it is arguable that this bill will have any impact at all on reducing problem gambling. Nonetheless, the primary aspect that appeals to Family First is that it brings this legislation into line with the fact that 18 is generally considered to be the age of responsibility. Fundamentally, our view is that problem gambling is such an issue that anything that is done to reduce the potential harm or potential risk of someone falling into problem gambling should be supported.

Last night, during one of my speeches I spoke about a good friend of mine who is now in her mid-thirties. She has had some horrendous problems with problem gambling over a period of some a 20 years. As part of our research to reach our final position on this bill, I contacted that person, and she disclosed to me that she was addicted to scratchies and the like at a young age.

That reinforced our position on this bill, because I have seen her go through some very difficult times and, frankly, almost 20 years later she is still not out of those difficulties. It also reinforces our belief that the later such activities become legal and, therefore, condoned by society, the greater the level of safety and reassurance that provides for the general community in our effort to reduce problem gambling. For that reason, we support the second reading of

this bill. We also acknowledge, though, the general position that ultimately governments cannot regulate problem gambling away. The reality is that these are individual decisions, and people need to take responsibility for their own decisions. However, we believe that when the damage can be so significant governments should legislate in order to reduce that possible risk. We commend the government on the bill. I am aware that the Hon. Mr Xenophon has had a similar bill before the house, and we commend him for that as well. Family First certainly supports this bill, and we look forward to its passage through the council.