

## **Labor Senators' Additional Comments**

1.1 Labor Senators recognise that well-regulated gambling has a place in Australian society and that the growth of illegal online gambling is of great concern. While the majority of people who bet gamble in a responsible manner, Labor knows that gambling in our community can, in some cases, have devastating social, financial and emotional consequences.

1.2 Labor Senators are supportive of many of the principles that underpin the Interactive Gambling Amendment (Sports Betting Reform) Bill 2015 (the bill) however we acknowledge that several recent developments render the bill unnecessary.

1.3 Labor Senators note that in April 2016, the government announced that it would implement its response to the O'Farrell Review in three tranches, and that in November 2016 an announcement was made that agreement had been reached between Australian, state and territory governments to establish a National Consumer Protection Framework for online wagering.

1.4 Labor Senators note that, as part of the first tranche of reform, the government's Interactive Gambling Amendment Bill 2016 (the government bill) passed the House of Representatives in February 2017 and the Senate with amendments in March 2017.

1.5 While Labor Senators welcome the government's response to the O'Farrell Review, and the commitment by Commonwealth, state and territory ministers to work together to develop and establish a national consumer protection framework, we want this important work to be completed without delay.

1.6 Labor Senators supported an amendment to the government bill proposed by the Nick Xenophon Team related to banning credit betting, noting that gambling can have devastating impacts in our community. Labor Senators also note that the Coalition government's own policy position has been to ban credit betting for a number of years. Labor urges the government to expedite progress on the issue of credit betting and remains open to working with government to ensure an appropriate balance is struck between existing business practices and much-needed consumer protection in this area.

1.7 Labor Senators also note problem gambling can cause significant harm and credit betting can be particularly problematic, often resulting in massive debts being incurred by people who simply cannot afford to pay them off. Labor Senators are supportive of measures that ensure there are appropriate protections for vulnerable Australians.

1.8 Labor's approach on the issue of gambling advertising demonstrates an understanding of, and confidence in, the co-regulatory system of broadcast regulation, as enshrined in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*. Labor believes that industry

should be afforded the time and flexibility needed to alter business practices and contractual arrangements to address community concerns.

1.9 For these reasons, Labor Senators regard the Interactive Gambling Amendment (Sports Betting Reform) Bill 2015 as unnecessary at this time.

**Senator Anne Urquhart**  
**Senator for Tasmania**

**Senator Anthony Chisholm**  
**Senator for Queensland**