

Media Statements



Media release

Treasurer
The Honourable Andrew Fraser

QUEENSLAND TO INTRODUCE 'RACE FIELDS' LEGISLATION TO PROTECT FUTURE OF RACING

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QUEENSLAND TO INTRODUCE 'RACE FIELDS' LEGISLATION TO PROTECT FUTURE OF RACING

In response to the New South Wales government's recent decision to allow fees to be charged against wagering operators who take bets on NSW races, the Queensland Government has today announced that it will introduce similar 'race fields' legislation to protect the future of racing in Queensland, Treasurer and Racing Minister Andrew Fraser said.

"The Queensland Government had no option but to go down the path of developing race fields legislation, following the breakdown of the 'gentleman's agreement', to ensure the Queensland racing industry is not out of pocket.

"Without such changes, the Queensland racing industry risks losing several million dollars per year to NSW alone.

"The Government will be recommending that Parliament makes the operation of the Bill retrospective to 1 September 2008 in line with the operation of the New South Wales legislation.

"It is expected that other States will introduce race fields legislation in the near future, with South Australia already indicating that its legislation will also apply retrospectively."

In making its decision, Mr Fraser said the Queensland Government was mindful of the recent High Court decision in the relation to the *Betfair v West Australian Government* case.

"It is important that any legislation does not discriminate against operators on a geographical basis. All wagering operators, whether based in Queensland or licensed elsewhere in Australia, will be required to gain approval to offer betting on Queensland races."

Mr Fraser said he expected the Bill to be introduced into Parliament before the end of the year.

The amendments to the Racing Act will allow the Queensland racing control bodies – Queensland Racing Limited, Queensland Harness Racing Limited and Greyhounds Queensland Limited – to charge wagering operators a turnover-based fee for using Queensland racing product.

"The amount of the fee will be determined by the Queensland racing industry, not the Government, as the money will go directly back to the industry," Mr Fraser said.

"NSW has determined that a fee of up to 1.5% on wagering turnover is an appropriate charge.

"Queensland's racing bodies will make their own decisions on a race fields fee that maintains an appropriate level of revenue for the Queensland Racing Industry.

The recent decision in the NSW Supreme Court is not expected to present difficulties in the drafting of the Queensland legislation to ensure all wagering operators contribute to the industry.

The three control bodies were briefed on the arrangements yesterday and Mr Fraser indicated that the consultation with other stakeholders would be undertaken before the Bill was introduced.

Contact: Renee Mickelburgh 0458 357 539

Brendan Connell 0437 837 976