



29 June 2009

ACT OF DOUBLE-JEOPARDY WITH EXTENDED TRADING BID

Member for Noosa Glen Elmes is calling for those Noosa residents who wish to protest against the application by Woolworths to extend the liquor licensing hours at the Villa Noosa Hotel to either get on line and lodge their e-petition or sign the paper petitions that are circulating at Noosa Village Newsagency and Pharmacy or at my office at Noosa Civic in Noosaville.

"I also want people to know that this application is a two-edged sword and is just the pre-cursor for a further application to extend gaming for the same hours. Without extended liquor licensing hours, they can't have extended gaming hours."

Glen Elmes said that he understands ALH or the Australian Leisure & Hospitality Group – 75% owned by Woolworths - operates 3800 of the 20,000 poker machines in Queensland hotels

"This so-called family friendly company has no compunction about adding to the cost of law and order problems in our community, which we all have to pay for. It's only concerned with the bottom line as one of its directors and chief operating officer is quoted as saying, that changes to liquor licensing laws in January had hit profits.

"The time has come for giant corporations such as Woolworths to take a responsible role within the communities they trade in. They cannot be allowed to ignore their communal responsibility.

"A recent report in the *Courier Mail* states that Queenslanders' growing addiction to pokies will help push State Government revenue from gambling to \$1 billion for the first time next financial year.

"The report went on to state that data from the Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing shows nearly 42,000 gaming machines last month swallowed up \$158 million – or more than \$5 million a day.

"I find this absolutely staggering and I wonder just how many families are suffering as a result of gambling addiction.

"The Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing said that the poker machine industry in Queensland is yet to reach its earning potential so do we conclude from this that there is further duplicity from the Bligh Government afoot in order to improve Treasury's coffers?

Glen Elmes said research showed that 85% of all problem gambling involves poker machines. Possibly the same percentage could be applied to problems within a community caused by excessive drinking.

"What do ALH and Woolworths plan to do? Keep the drink flowing and lower the punters ability to reason and rationalise so that they keep playing the pokies, regardless of the consequences.

"ALH and Woolworths, where is your sense of moral responsibility?"

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