

CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT (SUPERVISORY LEVY) BILL 2013

Bill introduced on motion by Mr George Souris, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr GEORGE SOURIS (Upper Hunter—Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts) [11.00 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Casino Control Amendment (Supervisory Levy) Bill 2013 amends the Casino Control Act 1992 to allow a casino supervisory levy to be imposed on the casino operator. Regulating the activities of the Sydney casino is one of the key responsibilities of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority. The authority's functions include the licensing of individuals performing sensitive functions at the casino, the approval of new games, auditing of casino revenue and, most importantly, the monitoring of casino operations on a 24-hour, seven-day per week basis through an on-site inspectorate. The authority also undertakes detailed licence investigations under section 31 of the Act every five years and inquiries into specific matters as required.

Under the existing arrangements much of the cost of maintaining the casino regulatory regime in New South Wales is borne by taxpayers. Regulatory systems are in place to protect industry integrity and ensure that the operation of the casino is free from criminal influence and exploitation. Regulation also promotes community confidence that the conduct of operations at the casino is fair and that the casino is operated in a responsible manner. The casino environment is a dynamic one and the regulator is required to regularly review and adjust its approach to protect against emerging risks and maintain public confidence. There is currently no ongoing levy imposed on the casino to assist in meeting the day-to-day public costs of maintaining this regulatory system.

The bill before the House provides for the introduction of a supervisory levy to assist in meeting these costs and ensuring a high degree of oversight and supervision of the casino is maintained. The amount of the levy will be prescribed via a regulation-making power in the Casino Control Act. The levy will be paid to the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority. Providing for the levy in regulations will allow it to be adjusted periodically for inflation and to reflect adjustments to the regulatory activities as necessary. The Government's intention is to have regulations in place for the 2013-14 financial year. Consultation with the casino operator is underway to facilitate the commencement of the supervisory levy within that time frame.

A casino environment demands intensive oversight to ensure that the unique risks associated with such a venue are identified and managed within a strict regulatory framework. A robust system of casino monitoring and supervision ensures appropriate accountability and consequently promotes public confidence for the people of New South Wales. It is appropriate that costs associated with achieving these outcomes should be borne by the

casino operator. The bill before the House will help to achieve that. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Paul Lynch and set down for a future day.