

Mr. O'Farrell,

When Treasurer Scott Morrison announced the review which you are chairing he said "I have deliberately left the terms of reference broad to ensure former Premier O'Farrell can look at everything he needs to, with no preconceived notions." Therefore I have perused your review's terms of reference but also formed it around what I believe to be the most important issues - from a punter's perspective - for the Federal Government to consider.

1. Problem Gambling; Corporate bookmakers overall have strong problem gambling infrastructures in place. I really don't feel they need to do any more than they have already. However their level of advertising during live sport must change. They should be banned from having any part of telecasts. All other forms of advertising are acceptable. My generation and yours all grew up with no gambling around the sports we love - now, the next generation are coerced into thinking that the only way to enjoy live sport is to bet on it as well. This is most alarming when you consider the mostly rapacious conduct of the Corporate Bookmakers. Which leads me on...
2. Minimum Bet Limits; It makes my blood boil when I see the blanket advertising Corporate Bookmakers throw at major sport in Australia knowing that the majority of them believe their bookmaking licence to be an entitlement, where the punter is merely fodder for their bottom line. Any punter that is not considered "economically viable" to a bookmaker has their account closed or severely restricted. Bookmakers offer people the opportunity to win money - that's their product. They must be forced by the Federal Government to be true to this. Punter outrage over the last couple of years has led to some change from a minority of Corporate Bookmakers but there is still a long way to go. The bookmaking industry in Australia has been hijacked by foreign raiders who are intent on expanding the highly unethical business practices they have been allowed to get away with - mostly in U.K. and Europe - by ignorant, complicit regulators. These practices have had serious negative social impacts. The Federal Government must stand up to them. They are welcome here - but it must be to Australia's advantage. Your review must either recommend introducing minimum bet limits for all Australian Corporate Bookmakers or explain to the Australian public why gambling should be allowed in society when no one can actually win at it?
3. Illegal Offshore Wagering; the biggest threat is money being leaked to Asian betting exchanges. Punters are turning to these because they can't get their bets on here because of account closures and restrictions but also because of the outdated, non-competitive structure of tote betting in Australia. Your review should begin talks between TabCorp., Tatts Bet and racing regulators about drastically overhauling tote-takeout rates. Tote-takeout rates of 18-20% are simply not viable long term in the digital age when compared with sportsbetting which has take-out rates of 3-5%. Many punters in Australia who have been barred by Corporate Bookmakers can bet on Asian betting exchanges and receive between 10-24% commission back on their bets. All punters want to support the Australian industry but when we have been treated so poorly for so long betting with these Asian exchanges is most compelling.

Yours,

Richard Irvine