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Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the Review of the Racing and Wagering Western Australia Acts

This Association takes pleasure in being invited to participate in submitting comments to the Parliamentary Committee in relation to the above Acts.

1. The effectiveness in the operation of RWWA has two main areas of concern.
 - (a) INTEGRITY: we give unqualified support to the RWWA administration with respect to the procedures in place carried out by the steward's panel. Their independence from the principal club is and has been of paramount importance to the industry. Participants and the racing public in general, can feel comfort in the knowledge that all facets of racing are represented by a code of conduct that represents trust and transparency for all, if and when the need arises.
 - (b) FINANCIAL: all racing codes have benefited financially since the inception of RWWA on 1st August 2003 with improvements on a number of fronts including substantial increases in stake money and improvements to track facilities.

2. Continuation of the operations of RWWA?

The concept of code specific consultation bodies that were initiated by RWWA has gone a long way to improving the stature and viability of many racing clubs and associated industries. These consultation groups are a real necessity as they bring into focus some of the nuts and bolts aspects from the many varied interest groups that would otherwise be glossed over. RWWA is to be complimented for this initiative.

It is critical that RWWA continues in its current form and seek to improve its ability to further increase its income stream from the very competitive leisure dollar.

The Western Australian Bookmakers Association (Inc) (WABA) is primarily involved with the thoroughbred industry where 95% of our members operate. It follows, that it is in our overwhelming interest to ensure that thoroughbred racing and to a lesser extent the harness racing industry prosper. Governments past and present recognise that the racing industry as a whole provides huge economic and social benefits to the community. Funding levels need to be constantly revised and increases sought where possible so that the on-course infrastructure is, at the very least, maintained and more importantly, improved. Little has been done to encourage and look after the lifeblood of the industry i.e., the paying punter. Without the "punter" you have no industry. In the past, vast sums have been spent on up-

grading tracks and facilities that do not directly benefit the public. Attendances in general at all codes (apart from feature days such as the Melbourne Cup) are generally low. We feel that this could be turned around if funding was directed at providing much needed improvements to facilities. Today, the on-course provider has to compete with state of the art TAB's, the casino and the new boys on the block, the corporate bookmaker and betting exchanges. The internet has changed people's habits and to some extent how they manage their leisure time. It is all too easy for them to remain in the comfort of their own home and bet on-line.

In a perfect world you would have a betting area (e.g. Ascot/Belmont racecourse) enclosed with air conditioning and the creature comforts associated with it, close to the mounting yard for easy access with tote, bookmakers, food and beverages in close proximity. A design along these lines could be investigated. The government needs to invest funding so that the current participation rate of on-course patronage is maintained and an increase in growth is encouraged to protect any further decay to the industry. The government through RWWA must invest in the future if the racing industry is to prosper. Industry prospers = more return to the government = more funding to the industry and so it goes on.

3. In conclusion we would like to emphasise : -

- (a) The need for RWWA to access more products and make them available to their patrons so as to generate new income.
- (b) The on-course patron, the one that provides the income stream must be invested in if the industry is to grow and prosper. Without them the gambling cycle that makes the entire industry exist would falter. We should never lose sight of which the real benefactor is that makes the racing industry one of Australia's largest employers. Pamper them and everybody is a winner.

Once again, we thank you for the opportunity to participate in this review and look forward to appearing before the Parliamentary Committee when the time arrives.

Bob Howat
President

Brian Brown
Secretary

25 February 2010