

# Gambling Amendment Bill introduced

Legislation introduced today will ensure that the Gambling Act operates as intended, Internal Affairs Minister Rick Barker said.

“The Gambling Act is large and complex and as is common with new legislation of this nature, during its implementation a number of issues have been identified requiring improvement. The Gambling Amendment Bill (No 2) contains many technical amendments and some minor policy enhancements to clarify the law and remove any uncertainties,” said Rick Barker.

The Bill includes amendments to:

- Widen the suitability criteria for gaming machine operators and licensed promoters to cover a wider range of offences and management prohibitions
- Introduce explicit obligations on grant recipients to use pokie grants appropriately, including an offence for non-compliance
- Extend conflict of interest safeguards to all persons making decisions on gaming machine grants, not just those with “key roles” in the management of the society
- Strengthen requirements on venues banking gaming machine profits
- Enhance regulation-making powers to better deal with problem gambling
- Introduce requirements for the accurate disclosure of non-cash prizes as a consumer protection measure
- Provide more flexibility for clubs wishing to merge their club and gaming machine operations to address financial viability issues.

„The introduction of this Bill is designed to address the technical changes that need to be made in order to assist the

department and gambling sector to engage with more clarity. Work on the bigger picture issues identified in the reports into allegations at Christchurch Casino is underway and it would be premature to address these through what is largely a technical bill. Officials are currently working to better understand the issues identified and only once this process is completed will we be in a position to address these.

The Gambling Act brought the biggest changes to the gambling sector in over 20 years and became fully operational on 1 July 2004. It aimed to:

- Control the growth of gambling
- Prevent and minimise gambling harm
- Authorise some gambling and prohibit the rest
- Facilitate responsible gambling
- Ensure the integrity and fairness of games
- Restrict opportunities for crime or dishonesty
- Ensure that money from gambling benefits the community
- Facilitate community involvement in decisions about the provision of gambling.