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Federal Government's action to combat Illegal Offshore Wagering

Racing Australia on behalf of Australia's 8 State and Territory Principal Racing Authorities has welcomed the Federal Government's announcement today on wagering issues critical to the future of the industry.

"The Government and Minister Alan Tudge have consulted and considered the many complex issues arising from the O'Farrell Report in the most comprehensive way since the Interactive Gambling Act was enacted in 2001" Racing Australia Chairman John Messara AM said today.

"We congratulate the Minister and Government for the decisive action taken to address the growing integrity risks to racing posed by illegal offshore bookmakers."

"The legislative measures proposed by the Government are proportionate to the threat and importantly provide security to Australian consumers who are often unable to distinguish between unregulated Asian operators and regulated operators" Mr Messara said.

"Integrity is the foundation of public and punter confidence in the industry and the Government's actions safeguard it in the ever evolving online world. We regard the key legislative initiatives as:

- *Amending the Interactive Gambling Act 2001 to make it clear that it is illegal for unlicensed overseas gambling companies to offer gambling products to Australians, unless they are licensed by a state or territory. This includes empowering the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to have stronger enforcement mechanisms.*
- *Establishing a national consumer protection framework to empower individual gamblers to ensure that problem gambling is minimised. A component of the framework will include ensuring that Australians bet with money that they already have, by seeking to ban lines of credit for online wagering.*
- *Consultation with banks and credit card providers to potentially introduce strategies such as "payment blocking" to limit the transactions that illegal offshore wagering operators may undertake.*
- *Consulting with Internet Service Providers to assess potential options to reduce their availability to Australian consumers.*

- *Introducing legislation to reflect that the Australian online wagering agencies offering "click to call" type in-play betting services are breaching current provisions of the Interactive Gambling Act 2001.*

"The Government has been greatly aided by Barry O'Farrell's report. We thank Mr O'Farrell for the depth of his understanding of the complex and important issues at stake and his commitment to provide solutions to problems previously regarded as intractable."

"The Racing Industry looks forward to working with the Government in coming months to implement these reforms. Today's announcement will give racing's 200,000 employees greater confidence in the sustainability of their industry into the future" Mr Messara concluded.

For further information:

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