



Statement addressing matters related to Crown Perth and the report of the Bergin Inquiry

The Gaming and Wagering Commission of Western Australia (GWC) met today to consider the report of the Bergin Inquiry.

The GWC will now formally recommend that an independent inquiry under the *Casino Control Act 1984* be established under the direction of the Minister for Racing, Gaming and Liquor into matters uncovered by the Bergin Inquiry specific to Crown Perth operations.

The GWC cannot act solely on the basis of the Bergin Report, and so will recommend that the scope of the inquiry extend to the following:

- the suitability of Crown Perth as a casino gaming license operator in WA in light of the findings of the Bergin report
- the suitability of close associates
- the appropriateness of Crown Perth's responses to the GWC prior to and during the Bergin Inquiry
- the effectiveness of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and the GWC in the discharge of its regulatory responsibilities inclusive of any perceived conflicts of interest and,
- recommendations on potential legislative amendments or regulatory controls that will address strategic risks identified in the Bergin Inquiry.

In recommending that the Minister direct the GWC it will ensure that the inquiry has the powers of a Royal Commission as opposed to general powers of an investigation by the GWC.

The GWC would like to commend the work of Patricia Bergin SC and her team on what was an extensive and thorough investigation into the appropriateness of Crown attaining a restricted gaming licence in NSW and the ongoing governance of Crown Casinos across two jurisdictions.

The GWC acknowledges the seriousness of the findings and has been working co-operatively with the Bergin Inquiry since it came to light.

At all times the GWC has cooperated with the Bergin Inquiry and has kept abreast of its developments.

Following the release of the Bergin report last Tuesday, the GWC immediately referred it to the WA State Solicitor's Office for advice.

The GWC had been able to bring forward its meeting to today where the Commissioners were able to formally consider both State Solicitor's Office advice and responses to the Bergin Inquiry by Crown Resorts Pty Ltd.

In addition, the GWC determined that directions under the *Casino Control Act 1984* are to be prepared for ratification by the Commission at its meeting on Tuesday 23 February to prohibit junket operations at Crown Perth and requiring the Casino operator to obtain Commission approval to establish gaming bank accounts.

The GWC has reached out to the New South Wales and Victorian regulators to establish a working group with a view to establishing consistent best practice across three jurisdictions and to provide for engagement with key Federal agencies responsible for the *Anti-money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006*.

The GWC acknowledges the attendance of the Deputy Commissioner of WA Police, Col Blanch at today's GWC meeting.

Comments related to the operation of junkets at Crown Perth

The GWC has confidence that in light of international borders closing due to COVID-19 there were no junkets taking place at Crown Perth from March 2020.

The last junket from mainland China to Crown Perth was in November 2016, the last from Hong Kong was August 2019 and the last from Macau was March 2020.

At the December 2020 GWC meeting, the Commissioners noted Crown's suspension of junket operations and the closure of the Riverbank account.

Comments related to Mr Connolly's associations with Crown Perth staff

At the October 2020 GWC meeting, Mr Connolly made a formal declaration of an interest due to his personal associations with staff at Crown Perth.

At today's meeting, the Chair advised the GWC of due diligence measures taken by himself in his capacity as Director General to ensure the declaration of conflict of interest had not impacted the regulation of the Crown Perth casino.

In light of that declaration, the Chair of the GWC advised the Public Sector Commissioner, as the appropriate authority to deal with matters relating to public sector employees of the outcome of the due diligence inquiry that was undertaken by a suitably qualified person under the *Casino Control Act 1984*.

At the November 2020 GWC meeting, a decision was taken to commission an independent performance audit by Ernst and Young into the oversight GWC has undertaken during the period of the Bergin Inquiry. That audit is due to be finalised by the end of February 2021.

In consideration that there should be no perception of a conflict of interest, Mr Connolly volunteered to step aside from his role as chief casino officer effective immediately. Mark Beecroft assumed the role to assist the GWC with its response to the inquiry report and this was confirmed by the GWC at today's meeting.