

Paper for the Bills Committee

Betting Duty (Amendment) Bill 2003

Initial response to the views of the Bills Committee

A summary of the views of Members of the Bills Committee at the meeting of 23 May and the Administration's response is set out in the following table:

	Views	Administration's response
1	To commission academic institutes other than the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct the follow-up survey or study relating to the prevalence of problem and pathological gambling in Hong Kong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The academic institutes to be responsible for the gambling-related survey and research would be selected through an open tendering exercise and all tertiary institutes would be invited to submit proposals.
2	To consider conducting comparative studies in Hong Kong and Macau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would consider conducting such a study.
3	To expedite the implementation of the measures to address gambling-related problems so that preventive education programmes and the provision of treatment services for problem and pathological gamblers would	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recognize the need to implement the preventive and remedial measures for addressing gambling-related problems (not particular to football betting) on a <u>long-term</u> basis. It is for this reason that we decided to set up a dedicated fund for this purpose. The various measures would start to be implemented as from mid-2003. This would be done regardless of whether our legislative proposal on authorizing football betting is passed or not.

	commence before the operation of authorized football betting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the increasing prevalence of illegal football gambling and its associated problems, we see an urgent need to combat it through authorization and regulation of football betting. This seeks to supplement the anti-gambling legislation and Police enforcement actions. • On the other hand, it would take time for preventive and remedial measures on gambling-related problems to produce any material impact on the community. • We therefore consider the <u>concurrent</u> implementation of law enforcement, authorization and regulation, as well as preventive and remedial measures for gambling-related problems a pragmatic and effective approach in tackling the problems caused by illegal football gambling.
4	To ensure that counselling and treatment services for problem and pathological gamblers would be provided by qualified experts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would invite NGOs to submit proposals for this purpose. The applicants would be required to provide information relating to the qualifications and experience of their staff, and to propose appropriate training for their staff. This could ensure that the counselling and treatment services for problem and pathological gamblers would be provided by individuals with relevant qualifications and experience.
5	To review the demand for the services for problem and pathological gamblers regularly and to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would monitor the service needs and the resource requirements after the service has come into operation and would respond to those needs as appropriate.

	provide adequate resources to meet the demand.	
6	To consider establishing a mechanism to ensure the provision of funding for the continuous operation of the dedicated fund so that it could continue even if operation of authorized football betting is terminated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have reached an agreement with the Hong Kong Jockey Club, whereby the latter would contribute to the fund in the first five years of the football betting licence period. The dedicated fund would also accept donations from other sources for the purpose. We would review the funding arrangement in the light of demand as and when we proceed with implementing the measures.
7	To ensure that the representatives from the fields of religion, education, social work and research would be appointed to the advisory committee on the management and use of the dedicated fund and to the Gaming Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is our intention to invite representatives from different sectors, including the education, social welfare, and religious sectors to sit on the management committee of the dedicated fund. We would invite representatives from different sectors to sit on the Gaming Commission. Different opinions would be represented.

**Home Affairs Bureau
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