

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009

### HYDRO LORD

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (15:15):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Police and the Attorney-General a question about a board game called Hydro Lord.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON:** Recently, I was informed that the board game Hydro Lord has been classified as M, a classification that carries no restrictions on what age a consumer must be to purchase but does require consumer advice to be displayed. I find this incomprehensible.

One cannot view this game and not draw the conclusion that it intentionally glorifies the drug culture and criminal behaviour. Hydro Lord is a board game similar in style to Monopoly but, instead of playing the game to own hotels, the player who accumulates the most hydroponic set-ups is the winner. Along the way to becoming a drug kingpin, the player will draw cards that either offer an advantage or a disadvantage. Cards include, among others, the following categories: 'Go to jail for using a blood filled syringe to rob an inner city clothing store'; 'Pay a \$500 fine for savagely attacking two women after arranging sadomasochistic sex sessions'; 'At a public toilet, you crush to death a nine week old baby after collapsing from an overdose. Pay a fine of \$1,000'; and 'You sell cuttings (referring to cannabis plants), collect \$5,000 from each set-up you own'. These cards trivialise, glorify or educate the player in the commission of a crime. I assume that it is with sarcasm that the game's website describes Hydro Lord as an educational tool for parents.

Hydro Lord first came to the attention of the public after the publisher, Mr Edward Khammash of Parafield Gardens, admitted to employing the promotional tool of leaving the game in people's driveways, on footpaths and in children's playgrounds across our suburbs, from Stirling to Glenelg to Victor Harbor, during school holidays. He did so because he knew the contents of the game would rightly provoke public anger, gain media attention (which it did) and, in doing so, provide the game with free exposure.

This game is so contentious and morally destitute that the public outcry was justified, yet the Classification Board apparently disagrees with the public and instead has given the game a classification that allows it to be sold to anyone, be they adult or child.

Due to this deficient classification, Mr Khammash has not committed an offence in not having Hydro Lord classified prior to its first going on sale in 1997, as I had hoped. However, I am aware that neither the Hydro Lord packaging nor the website displays the consumer advice, as required by the Classifications (Markings for Publications) Determinations 2007, which is an offence. My questions for the Minister for Police and the Attorney-General are:

1. Given that I have been informed that the producer of Hydro Lord is failing to display the consumer advice, as is required by law, will the Minister for Police investigate this and report

to the parliament on whether an offence has been committed and whether the publisher will be charged?

2. Given the nature and the intention of Hydro Lord, does the Attorney-General agree with the Classification Board's classification of M? If not, will the Attorney-General make representations to the Classification Board and his federal counterparts, with the intention of revising Hydro Lord's present classification?

3. If the Attorney-General does agree with the classification, does he perceive a level of hypocrisy, given his staunch opposition to R18+ video games on the grounds of their potentially exposing youths to violence, sexual acts and drug use, similar to the inferences made in Hydro Lord?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (15:18): I am sure the Attorney-General would be interested in the questions and pleased to answer them. I understand that the Attorney-General has taken a high profile in relation to trying to ensure that the sorts of games described by the honourable member are properly classified.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Well, I understand it. If I recall correctly, I think I read in *The Advertiser* recently that one of the proponents of one of these games was going to run against the Attorney-General in protest to the position he has taken in relation to that game. I know the Attorney has a strong interest in such matters. As I have said, I believe he has taken a strong position against games that—

The Hon. T.J. Stephens: A tough position.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Well, the fact that there has been a reaction is a tribute to the position he has taken. I am sure the Attorney would be pleased to consider the questions asked by the honourable member, and I am happy to refer them to him.