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Newsagents Say NO to Government Lottery Sale

The Newsagents Association of NSW & ACT Ltd's board yesterday rejected the offer by the NSW Government which provided only three years guaranteed tenure for NSW Lotteries' Corporation franchises in NSW and ACT.

The Association, which has represented Newsagents in lottery matters since Jack Lang introduced lottery tickets, has argued that a new operator should allow Newsagents to sell lottery products whilst ever such outlet is returning money to the Government.

Newsagents have successfully and efficiently operated the State Governments Soft Gambling platform since the initial lottery tickets were introduced in 1931.

The decision of Treasurer Roozendaal provides an opportunity for a new operator to completely replace that platform to the detriment of the current network.

The proposed provisions, when written into a future operator's licence, potentially will allow the new operator to close all existing lottery agencies and house them in other retail venues such as supermarkets.

The Association Chairman Stan Cousins said *"he is concerned as to the insertion of this provision. The question is why? We know bidders are talking to the project managers and we are worried that a large bidder may be offering more if they can totally rearrange the network. This means that the NSW Government will make extra money on the initial payment for the licence at the expense of NSW and ACT Newsagent families"*

Mr Cousins added, *"NSW and ACT lottery agents need more business tenure than three years to achieve return on their investment and satisfy other business commitments"*.

Newsagents provide extensive services to metro, regional and country NSW and ACT as well as employment in those centres. In many locations, they provide the only community meeting place to exchange information, greetings and discuss the local happenings.

The Association will be in contact with the Opposition and further consider advice to the type of business relationship Newsagents have with NSW Lotteries.

"Whilst we understand the government's business case for transferring the licence, the Association cannot let this happen at the expense of the network's small businesses," Mr Cousins said.

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