

New Lotteries laws to further support WA community in COVID-19

Wednesday, 15 April 2020

- Laws to protect retailers, players and the community during and after COVID-19
- Temporary powers to enable Lotterywest to provide additional grants and fund other worthy grant programs
- Prize payout period extended and claims made easier as part of social distancing measures and minimises retailers contact during COVID-19
- Players to be able claim prizes regardless of travel restrictions, community isolation or due to temporary closure of retail outlets
- New laws to further support the \$159 million community COVID-19 Relief Fund

New laws to support Lotterywest retailers, players and the community will be introduced into the State Parliament today as part of further State Government measures to buffer the COVID-19 impact and inject more relief funding into the community.

The Lotteries Commission Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Bill 2020 will provide Lotterywest with temporary powers to utilise its expertise in grant administration to assist other public authorities to provide grant programs during and after COVID-19.

Hardship packages can be more readily developed to provide urgent financial relief for not-for-profits, arts and community organisations that have been severely impacted as a result of cancelled events - be it a loss of revenue or operational costs that had already been committed.

Eligible not-for-profit organisations will be able to continue grants for charitable or benevolent purposes during COVID-19. However, the new laws will also enable Lotterywest to expand its ability to fund other grant programs, using its existing processes, for the purposes of the emergency period.

As part of social distancing measures changes to the laws will enable for an extended prize payout period for lottery draws and instant lottery tickets in certain circumstances of up to 24 months and also allows for Lotterywest to accept a digital copy of a lottery ticket to pay prizes during the emergency period.

These measures will help better protect Western Australians who would otherwise have to present the physical ticket to a Lotterywest retailer or at the Lotterywest head office. This also minimises unnecessary contact for retailers during COVID-19.

This builds onto the \$159 million COVID-19 relief fund. An initial \$59 million is for crisis and emergency relief support for eligible not-for-profit and community organisations to assist with costs related to increased demand for food, clothing, shelter and other critical needs.

It also provides urgent financial relief for not-for-profit sports, arts and community organisations experiencing hardship as a result of cancelled events. Funding will also compensate for cancellation costs, lost revenue and incurred or committed operational costs associated with the cancelled event.

Every profit Lotterywest makes from jackpots, draws and tickets excluding statutory grant is being directed into the newly created fund to assist the Western Australian community to recover.

Comments attributed to Premier Mark McGowan:

"COVID-19 is the biggest economic crisis of our generation.

"Lotteries belongs to the community, it benefits the community and will do more so during a time of greatest need.

"It's now more important than ever that we make it easier to provide relief funding and hardship packages to the community.

"This Bill gives Lotterywest extended temporary powers to provide funding to other government agencies to undertake grants programs through its existing processes, to ensure no groups in need miss out.

"These changes expedite the distribution of funding and ensures swifter access to increased demands for crisis relief services and support.

"This Bill looks beyond the current COVID-19 crisis as the measures extend the payout period and makes it easier for claims to be made and provided even after the crisis.

"Winners will not be penalised if they cannot get to a retailer or Lotterywest head office to show their physical ticket and obtain a payout.

"It also means that there's reduced contact at retail outlets to better protect the community during the COVID-19.

"These new laws will bolster the COVID-19 Relief Fund to enable eligible not-for-profit and community organisations to support people experiencing hardship and will help us during recovery."

Minister's office - 6552 5200