

SE News  
HD **ROULETTE WHEEL SPINNERS ROLL IN**  
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CYCLONE Packer is bearing down on Queensland with the gambling mogul meeting the Newman Government within weeks to finetune his Brisbane casino offer.

The lavish Queen's Wharf casino project will be the city's first international integrated resort and construction is expected from 2017.

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James Packer's (pictured) Crown **group** and Asian partner Greenland will pitch for a decades-long licence to operate the Queen's Wharf casino over five blocks in George St.

Packer/Greenland are locked in the Queen's Wharf licence tussle with Treasury casino operator Echo and its **Hong Kong** partners. Packer's casino expansion plans in Japan, Las Vegas, Macau, Sri Lanka and Sydney has not gone unnoticed in George St.

Nor the Packer cash splash to **acquire** three luxury 15-seater long-range jets to ferry gamblers between Asia and his Australian casinos.

Premier Campbell Newman will announce the successful Queen's Wharf operator in plenty of time to soak up voter positives in time for the March election.

Bet-happy **Chinese** account for 12 per cent of total tourists to Queensland. But the George St underground railway station opposite the casino front door should reinforce casino taskforce figures that 70 per cent of Queen's Wharf visitors will be locals.

The "zillion-dollar" plans to redevelop the Alice-Queen street stretch will eventually deliver hundreds of **millions** in government taxes as well as offering the CBD much-needed "**bread** and circuses" north of Riverside.

WHAT THE EKKKA?

LATEST suggestion to boost Ekka attendances is Muslim prayer mat areas and worship rooms. That should go down a treat with the old National Party-moleskin mob.

And not all readers agreed the Ekka Wednesday should be one of the public holidays to be axed. "Bosses have 365 days to organise their businesses," cursed one public holidays fan.

ECHO OF VOTES AT JUPITERS ECHO has taken out insurance against Packer success in Brisbane with the plan for the new \$350 **million** hotel at Jupiters at Broadbeach, in time for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

The Echo extravaganza is a safe bet with political pressure certain to scuttle the Wavebreak Island (pictured) casino/cruise ship terminal in the Broadwater.

Newman Government argument is cruise companies prefer to refuel and provision in Brisbane amid speculation about a new terminal at the mouth of the Brisbane River. Environmental and fuel concerns have shark-circled the Wavebreak proposal since February.

The real reason for George Street jitters is nearby LNP seats such as Broadwater and Southport would face voter angst over the project. Wavebreak project support was split in a recent Gold Coast Bulletin poll.

SHOUTING NOT OVER ON LONG DRINKING HOURS LABOR has a chance for a pub brawl in Parliament with the Newman Government over extended drinking hours.

The moratorium on new post-midnight licences ends any day. Labor's grog policy is for 1am lockouts and bans on high alcohol drinks after midnight. The drinking age remains a sacred cow. Pity. Labor's new Stafford MP Dr Anthony Lynham (left) was outspoken on grog violence before recent tongue surgery.

POLL TRAPS' spy says no chance to an early election, but upheaval from the ALP conference this weekend may change things. If PUP remains yellow-carded with **China** syndrome, the temptation for Premier Newman to call a pre-G20 election will start to bite.

FAIR CHALLENGE BRISBANE bookies were stirred into a Packer challenge with reports confirmed the casino king had won control of wagering exchange Betfair. Brisbane rails bookies want minimum losing Saturday bets raised to \$5000 to confront the muscled-up Betfair and back the increases in state prizemoney. Punters can back fancies to win OR LOSE with Betfair.

"I already bet \$5000 in a single wager on Saturdays," said wily rails fielder Ray Karangis who supports a Brisbane bookmaking revival. Bookies such as Karangis laugh at the \$500 minimum for Doomben.

"The betting limit was reduced to counter price rorting," said RQ Integrity Chief Wade Birch.

But our rails bookies no longer turn over half a **million** bucks in Saturday phone bets.

Unpopular bookies prices in the Brisbane ring led to a commission of inquiry in 2005.

Former Victorian premier Jeff Kennett weighed to the betting debate blasting Darwin-based corporate bookies as "a cancer".

READY TO ROCK ROCKHAMPTON interest in the NRL future of the Gold Coast Titans is keener than ever. Despite lukewarm signals from Channel 9 over more Queensland teams, Central Queensland NRL-bid CEO Denis Keeffe also was quick to pick up on proposals for a new Cowboys stadium in Townsville.

"The Rocky region is dinkum rugby league heartland," he said.

ON MESSEGEROB Messenger is a Tasmanian convert to Tassie PUP Senator Jacqui Lambie. The former National Party MP is the chief of staff for livewire Lambie. She is likely to feature on ABC's Australian Story on September 8. "We're getting on just fine," Messenger said.

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