

E-SPORTS TRIAL BILL 2017

*An Bill for an Act to allow the AIS to fund E-Sports, and for related purposes.

Explanatory Memorandum

This bill is to allow our athletes in the field of E-Sports to have the same chances any professional athlete does, by allowing them to apply and be given funding through the Australian Institute of Sport, at least on a trial basis.

In Section 3 I define the length of time the trial will go for. (Approximately 2 and a half years unless extended by Parliament) thus giving clear notice this is a trial only

I have added a definition of what E-Sports is in section 4

In section 5 I added the need for a review panel to see how the trial is working for all, giving clear indications of what that panel should look at and should be comprised of.

I have also moved Amendments to the Australian Sports Commission Act 1989 as required to allow the trial to begin and progress in a smooth manner

Second Reading Speech

Mr Speaker. Names such as Jared Krensel, Andrew Pender, Damien Chok and Aaron Ward may not mean much to most of the Australian population. The nicknames of this players as well, PiG, Moonglade, Kpii and AZR also would not mean much to most of the population. In the world of e-sports though these names are revered, their triumphs and failures either cheered or felt by a small yet growing contingent of fans not just in Australia but around the world.

E-Sports, the competitive playing of video games in a tournament or league based environment is one of the fastest growing sectors of competition worldwide. Games such as Dota 2, Counter Strike: Global Offensive and Starcraft 2 are played by millions of people worldwide and the tournaments worldwide are watched by hundreds of thousands and in some cases millions of people.

Dota 2 recently held their International Tournament, where I'm pleased to report to the house that Damien Chok's team, Newbee finished second. Damien and his teammates each received a share of over 3 million dollars in prizemoney, Damien himself has banked more than 1.3 million dollars simply because of his hard work and dedication to being one of the best players of Dota 2 in the world.

Sadly this is not indicative of everyone Mr Speaker. E-sports athletes, like many professional athletes give up a lot of things in their lives in their quest to be an esports athlete capable of performing on the world stage. Many have to juggle many aspects of both their personal and professional lives to be able to pursue their dream of being the best. Many have school commitments, some have jobs, some try to supplement their incomes through the means of streaming their individual games to their loyal fanbases through the popular streaming platform Twitch. All because there is no other way in Australia currently to support an e-sports career.

Our best and brightest professional athletes are given supplements and financial aid for the buying of equipment or as a means to support their careers so they can focus on their training by the Australian Institute of Sport. Many of those athletes have become successes on the world stage and have represented Australia proudly at World Championships and Olympic Games around the world. Yet currently the laws of the land do not allow the AIS to help out our struggling e-sports athletes through the early stages of their careers, all because E-Sports are not recognized as a sport in this country.

Mr Speaker, this is grossly unfair to our young men and women, the boys and girls who pick up a video game for the basis of having fun, find out they are actually quite accomplished at the game and believe they may be able to make something of it in terms of a career path. Like professional sports, the time period once can make money professionally in e-sports in limited as skills decrease with age and the formative years of ones career are crucial in determining whether one will make it or not.

That is why I am submitting this bill to the house Mr Speaker, not to enable people that do not deserve these grants a free ride to sit at home and play video games all day but to give our best and brightest in this new field of sport the same level playing field as those in other countries.

Mr Speaker if I may indulge the house on the organization in South Korea known as KeSPA, the Korean E-Sports Association, KeSPA is a government funded association much like our Institute of Sport, that picks out the best and the brightest in South Korea in the field of E-Sports and helps them with funding as they start out their careers, these funds help with things like rent, food and schooling, leaving their players with nothing to worry about but their training.

To be the best in the world, these players are training up to 12 hours a day, they can not do these things with the burdens of having to earn money simply to survive hanging over their heads. That is why I am pushing for this bill to be accepted by the Parliament, to give our young hopefuls the same opportunities as those in other nations.

That said Mr Speaker, I have listened to concerns from my colleagues in this house and also concerned citizens in both my own electorate of Lalor and around Australia as well. They are concerned that recognising E-Sports as a sport would send the wrong message to our young impressionable people growing up that it is okay to sit around playing video games all day. As

such if this bill is passed I will be making an official motion to the Minister for Health to arrange an advertising program in conjunction with the various e-sports organizations in order to promote the lifestyle and training these athletes need to go through in order to be the best in their field.

Mr Speaker. E-Sports is one of the fastest growing sports in the world, all because you do not need to be tall, or muscular or freakishly talented to compete and be one of the best. All you need to have is to be good at the game, the same game everyone else around is playing and the hard work and dedication it takes to face the training and hurdles ahead to be the best in the world. Currently our e-sports athletes are going into this world with one hand metaphorically tied behind their back and behind the 8-ball before they even start.

They deserve better, they deserve not to be coddled or to be hamstrung simply because of an old world view that "Video Games are the devil" or "All video gamers are fat and lazy". They deserve a chance. The same chance any professional athlete already has through the Australian Institute of Sport.

It's time to bring Australia into the digital age and to embrace this new growing sport as the sport that it is. Not just because it is growing and it is fast becoming more popular than some traditional sports. But because this country was built on giving everyone who wants to pursue their dreams a fair go. I urge the house to support this bill and to give those dreamers a fair go. To do otherwise would be cruelty in the highest extreme. What price is a dream Mr Speaker? What price?

I commend the bill to the House.

THE PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIASIM ENACTS THE FOLLOWING:

1. Short Title

This Act may be cited as the *E-Sports Trial Bill 2017*

2. Commencement

This Act commences the day it receives Royal Assent.

3. Act to no longer have force after certain date

This Act ceases to have effect on the 1st July 2020.

4. Definitions

"*E-Sports*" means a electronic or video game capable of being played by more than one individual for the means of competition, be that through tournament or league play.

5. Review Panel

The Australian Sports Commission (as given in the Australian Sports Commission Act 1989) shall convene a review panel no later than 1 May 2018 comprised of interested members of parliament, e-sports professionals/organization members and concerned citizens to review how trial is proceeding and whether it should be made permanent, continued or scrapped.

6. Schedule

Each instrument that is specified in a Schedule to this instrument is amended or repealed as set out in the applicable items in the Schedule concerned, and any other item in a Schedule to this instrument has effect according to its terms.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Australian Sports Commission Act 1989

1. In Section 3

Insert the following definition:

sport shall mean both sports and e-sports.

2. In Section 3

Insert the following definition:

e-sports shall mean a electronic or video game capable of being played by more than one individual for the means of competition, be that through tournament or league play.