

Online gambling bill passed

Johannesburg – Online gambling in SA came one step closer to being regulated, with the passing of the National Gambling Amendment Bill in Parliament yesterday.

The Bill, introduced by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), aims to legalise Internet gambling by creating legislation for the licensing of interactive gambling activities.

In terms of the proposed legislation, software vendors providing online gambling platforms would have to obtain a national licence for key staff, as well as the interactive software itself, related equipment and the suppliers and maintenance providers of that equipment.

The end goal of the Bill, according to the DTI, is to protect players, ensure gambling revenue reaches the fiscus, retain interactive gambling players in SA, and keep children away from adult activities.

The department has said it chose not to follow the route of banning online gambling – as is the case in the US – as this only drives the activity underground.

The next step in enacting the Bill will be for it to be accepted by the National Council of Provinces, which may have to hold another round of public hearings on the matter in order to do this. Once the Bill is acceptable to all, it will be referred to president Thabo Mbeki for promulgation, after which it will be gazetted.