

STATEMENT

by Bob Bottom

Investigative journalist and author Bob Bottom says there has never been any first-hand proof that Sir Robert Askin personally received any bribe money relating to illegal casinos.

"Aside from a so-called impeccable, or family, source nominated by David Hickie, and separate claims by a Labor MP as well as a Liberal MP, no one has ever come forward with any proof.

"No police intelligence reports or telephone intercept records to which I had access ever detected anything linked to Askin.

"In retrospect, in retirement, reviewing past events and having written much about illegal gambling before, during and after the Askin regime, I thus now doubt whether Askin really did receive any bribe money to allow any of it to happen.

"Certainly there was police corruption at the highest level under his rule, even when he himself held responsibility as Minister of Police as well as being Premier.

"Illegal casinos continued to flourish though under the premierships of succeeding coalition Premiers Tom Lewis and Eric Willis, and likewise under Labor Premiers Neville Wran and Barry Unsworth and then even under coalition Premier Nick Greiner.

"Not unlike Askin, all at times initiated police action to close them but illegal casinos continued to reopen and flourish until the establishment of a large-scale, government sponsored legal casino at Darling Harbour in the mid-1990s.

"Indeed, by the time that move was made, whereas there were 13 illegal casinos under Askin, and 11 under Wran, there were 20 under Greiner.

"Unlike the legendary singling out of Askin, nobody has ever suggested, in the media or parliament, that Lewis, Willis, Wran, Unsworth or Greiner received any bribe money for allowing virtually the same number of illegal casinos to continue to flourish for two decades after Askin retired."

Signature



Date

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