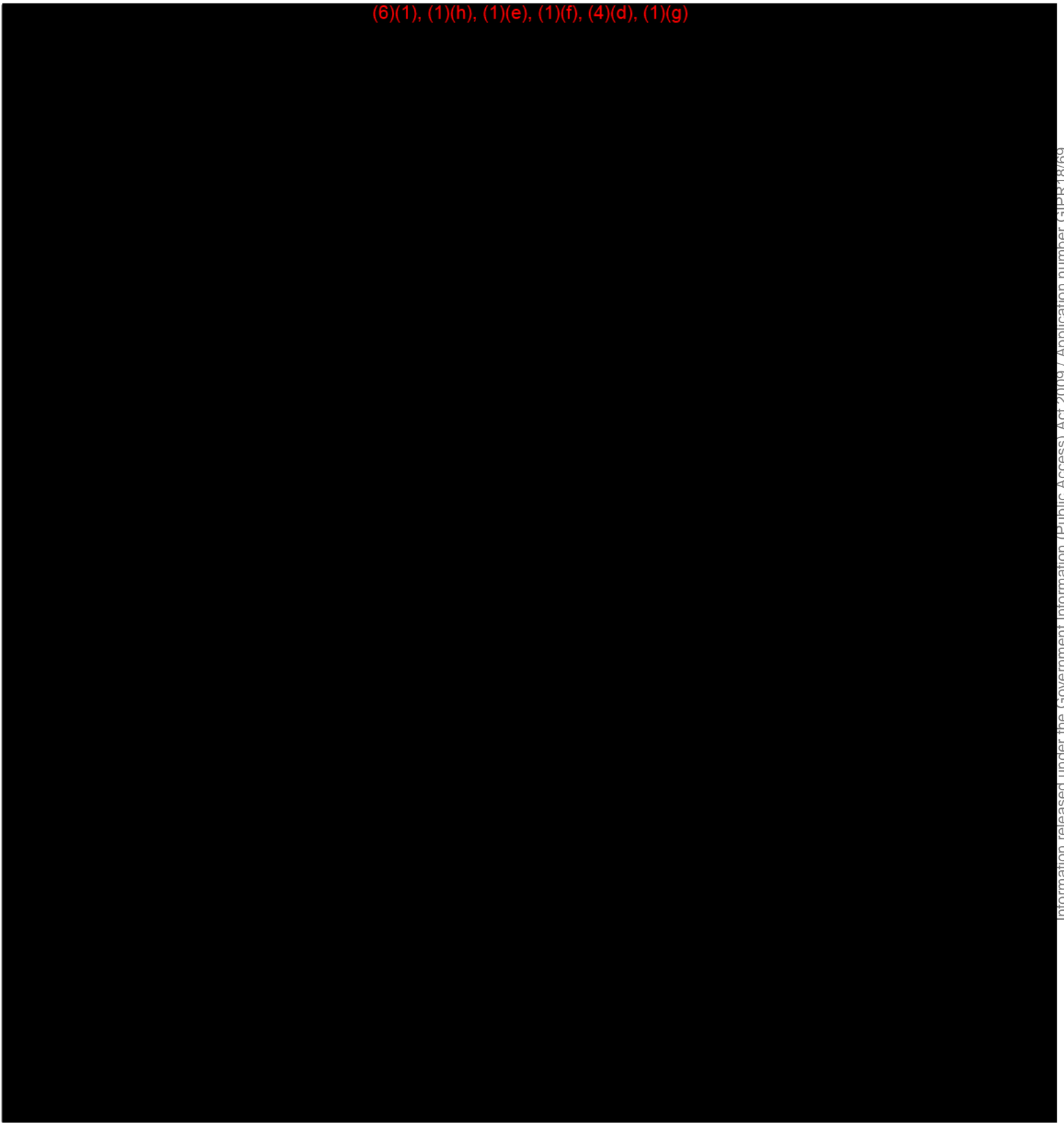


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**Trade &
Investment**
Office of Liquor, Gaming & Racing

(6)(1), (1)(h), (1)(e), (1)(f), (4)(d), (1)(g)



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Media Release

Tuesday 18 March, 2014

AUSTRALIAN VACCINATION NETWORK (AVN) NO LONGER A LICENSED CHARITY

Minister for Hospitality George Souris today warned the public not to make charitable donations to the Australian Vaccination-Skeptics Network Incorporated (AVSNI), formerly known as the Australian Vaccination Network Incorporated (AVN), as it is no longer a registered charity.

Mr Souris said the association had surrendered its 'Authority to Fundraise' under the Charitable Fundraising Act following an investigation into its anti-vaccination activities by the Office of Liquor, Gaming & Racing (OLGR).

"OLGR issued a 'show cause' notice to the association requiring it to respond in writing on why its Authority to Fundraise should not be revoked," Mr Souris said.

"As a result, the association has now surrendered its Authority to Fundraise to OLGR effective immediately".

Under the Charitable Fundraising Act, if an organisation intends to fundraise for a charitable purpose it must be the holder of an Authority to Fundraise.

However, an Authority to Fundraise for a charitable purpose can be revoked if determined to be in the public interest. One of the objects of the Charitable Fundraising Act is to prevent deception of members of the public who desire to support worthy causes.

"OLGR's investigation sourced expert medical evidence challenging the accuracy of information provided on the association's website in relation to the risks and benefits of vaccination," Mr Souris said.

"The investigation highlighted a range of potential concerns, including risks arising from the association's anti-vaccination advocacy and the potential for misinformation to influence important health decisions resulting in potentially adverse public health consequences.

"As the Australian Vaccination-Skeptics Network Incorporated does not hold an Authority to Fundraise from OLGR they can no longer fundraise for a charitable purpose".

Minister for Fair Trading, Stuart Ayres, said the association recently changed its name, to the Australian Vaccination-Skeptics Network Incorporated, following a direction from Fair Trading and an Administrative Decisions Tribunal decision requiring it to adopt a name accurately reflecting its scepticism about vaccinations.

"I warn members of the public against making donations to this organisation.

"NSW Government agencies will continue to monitor the organisation's activities to ensure it does not fundraise for a charitable purpose."

Minister for Health Jillian Skinner said she is very proud of the NSW Liberal & Nationals Government's commitment to childhood vaccination.

"On January 1 this year, new legislation came into effect to ensure no child can be enrolled at a child care facility unless the parent/guardian provides an official immunisation record which shows the child is fully immunised or has been granted an exemption after the parents/guardian have met with a GP or nurse immuniser.

"Our Government is determined to protect our children from the devastating consequences of vaccine-preventable disease.

"While NSW has a very high rate of vaccination among children, we will continue to do all we can to protect those children who remain unvaccinated.

"Forget the scaremongering - there is nothing to fear from vaccination," Ms Skinner said