



Andrew Wilkie MP
INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR DENISON

06 DEC. 2016

The Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets
Legislative Council
Parliament of Tasmania
Parliament House
HOBART TASMANIA 7000

Dear Secretary

In my six years as a Federal MP, I've become a lightning rod for the community's concern about poker machines and problem gambling. The personal stories are heartbreaking – bankruptcy, theft, deception, jail, broken families and suicide.

The harm caused by poker machines has been researched and reported on in great detail, for example in the landmark 2010 Productivity Commission Inquiry Report into Gambling, the First Report of the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform and the three independent Social and Economic Impact Studies of Gambling in Tasmania.

No wonder the community wants reform. Indeed, polling conducted by Community Voices on Pokies Reform shows four in five Tasmanians want poker machines reduced in number or removed entirely from pubs and clubs. The same research also shows that one in three Tasmanians knows someone seriously affected by gambling on poker machines.

The depth of community concern isn't surprising when you consider that 15 per cent of people who play the pokies weekly are problem gamblers, while a similar number are regarded as at risk. The latest Australian Gambling Statistics reveal a staggering \$11.6 billion is lost to poker machines nationally. Tasmania's share of the losses is close to \$200 million, 40 per cent which is fleeced from problem gamblers.

In other words the conditions are ripe for meaningful reform and it would be a dreadful failure of governance if politicians do not seize it.

The State Government's decision to award a separate licence for the poker machines in the casinos from 2013 is, in particular, an unprecedented opportunity to rid the pubs and clubs of the dreadful machines. There's no obligation on the Government to issue any additional licence or licences at that point in time, and to tell the pubs and clubs now that this is the intention would give them more than enough time to prepare for business without pokies.

The decision more than 20 years ago to allow poker machines into the pubs and clubs was a mistake. The evidence shows that increasing accessibility to gambling increases the likelihood of problems and this can be seen first-hand in Glenorchy, which is home to 270 of the state's 3,596 poker machines and where annual losses on the pokies run at more than \$20 million a year. That the community in Glenorchy has a dim view of poker machines is unarguable – made clear in the record number of submissions opposing recent applications for more poker machines in its pubs.

It's time for real reform. Tasmanians want poker machines out of their communities and proper harm minimisation, as recommended by the Productivity Commission, such as \$1-maximum bets and mandatory pre-commitment, implemented as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Wilkie'.

Andrew Wilkie MP
Independent Member for Denison

From: Allingham, Kate (A. Wilkie, MP) <Kate.Allingham@aph.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 6 December 2016 2:49 PM
To: fgm
Subject: Submission from Andrew Wilkie MP re Future Gaming Markets
Attachments: SKMBT_C55416120615050.pdf

Good afternoon,

Please see the attached submission from Mr Wilkie to the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Kind regards

Kate Allingham
Office of Andrew Wilkie MP
188 Collins Street
Hobart TAS 7000
03 6234 5255
kate.allingham@aph.gov.au
www.andrewwilkie.org