
From: Tara Smith <taras@utas.edu.au>
Sent: Friday, 9 December 2016 3:33 PM
To: fgm
Subject: submission to the gaming inquiry
Attachments: Quaker Community Voice on Pokies Reform Submission.docx

Dear Secretary,
Please find attached a submission on behalf of the Tasmanian Quaker regional meeting for consideration by the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets.
Kind regards,
Tara Smith

University of Tasmania Electronic Communications Policy (December, 2014).

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Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets 2016

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Tasmania strongly affirms our opposition to poker machine gaming in Tasmania.

Quakers have been part of the fabric of Tasmanian society since 1832 when British Quakers, James Backhouse and George Walker, travelled to Van Dieman's land 'under concern' for the treatment of Tasmanian aborigines and convicts. Having travelled and reported extensively on their findings, they made a major humanitarian contribution to the treatment of Aboriginal people, penal reforms, the anti-slavery movement and to education. Since then, Quakers have continued to be active in many areas within communities including in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport, Kingborough and the Huon.

Why Quakers oppose the Pokies

Friends' testimony against gambling is rooted in concern for the moral and spiritual wellbeing of individuals and also of our society. In early days, gambling was seen as detrimental because it engenders greed, covetousness and sloth. In modern times it is perceived as an example of a small minority of people profiting from the hopes and fears of a less well-off majority. This is at odds with Quaker notions of social justice and right sharing of resources.

The prevalence of poker machine gaming offends our belief about loving our neighbours and sharing resources. We wish to stand together with other community voices on pokies reform - and with all who share our values, against the rush to become a gambling society. We see the pokies as promoting the illusion that wealth is the ultimate fulfilment. It concerns us that obtaining wealth through chance and without effort is becoming an acceptable norm for Tasmanian society. Furthermore, the trickery used in sophisticated gambling programs designed to 'hook the player' (and maximise gambling profits,) is not only dishonest but knowingly nurtures gambling addiction. One in five people who regularly use pokies will become addicted. More than 2,500 Tasmanians are hooked on poker machines and many more are at risk. The resulting misuse of resources also means that many basic human needs in affected families cannot be fully met.

Quakers are fundamentally opposed to gaming and ask the State government not to issue any new licences for poker machines in pubs and clubs in Tasmania. We believe it undermines and weakens community values including that of integrity and equality. People with an addiction to pokies deserve continued support and resources, just as businesses relying upon this income stream also need support and encouragement to leave the gaming industry.

Tasmania Regional Meeting