



Cr Michael Kent AM
Mayor
Glamorgan Spring Bay Council
PO Box 6
TRIABUNNA TAS 7190

13 JAN 2015

Dear Mayor *Michael* Kent AM,

As you may be aware, Brighton Council has long been opposed to the proliferation of poker machines in our community and particularly their concentration in lower socio-economic areas. Indeed, in 1997, Brighton Council initially rejected the planning application for the installation of poker machines in the municipality, but this was overturned by the State Planning Tribunal as the Government's gambling legislation overrides local government planning powers.

With the issue of the extension of the poker machine monopoly now very much under consideration, I believe it is important that local government again consider the impact of this form of gambling on our communities.

It is worth noting that Tasmanians lost almost \$200 million on poker machines last financial year, much of it taken from people who can least afford it. This is an unacceptable statistic and one that must be addressed by all levels of government.

Independent research released at the end of last year by respected social welfare agency Anglicare, shows 84 per cent of Tasmanians believe that the community receives no benefit from poker machines and 50 per cent of the population wants them removed from hotels and clubs.

Undoubtedly, gambling on poker machines is having significant adverse consequences for Tasmanian families, small business and general economic activity, and the community is unhappy. The information released by Anglicare clearly demonstrates that the Tasmanian community does not believe the State gets any positive return from poker machines in hotels and clubs, and the majority of people want them removed.

Brighton's concerns are not just centred on problem gambling. The reality is that the adverse impacts of poker machines go considerably beyond problem gambling. Our concerns are also about money being bled from local communities and this impacts on families, small businesses and the community in general.

Where incomes are low, money spent gambling on poker machines can mean that families go without food, medical treatment, heating and other basic, even vital, necessities, as well as subjecting many to domestic violence.

As councils we cannot stand idly by while this occurs.



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Consequently, Brighton Council recently joined the Tasmanian Community Coalition campaigning for a curb on poker machines in hotels and clubs, as well as the National Alliance for Gambling Reform. The local Coalition comprises welfare organisations, community groups and people concerned at the adverse impacts of this form of gambling and interested in alleviating the consequential suffering in our community.

The Coalition has called for poker machines to be phased out in hotels and clubs, for a reduction in the maximum bet to \$1 and for pokies to be restricted to the two casinos in Hobart and Launceston. This is very much in line with the feeling of the Tasmanian community as confirmed by the independent research conducted for Anglicare.

Brighton Council intends placing this crucial community issue on the agenda for the forthcoming LGAT meeting and I look forward to discussing this further with you and our Mayoral colleagues. Our strong position is that we have a responsibility to achieve reforms in the gambling industry to minimise harm and particularly reduce the impacts on our more vulnerable communities.

In the meantime, I invite your Council to consider joining the Tasmanian Community Coalition, to represent our local communities and strengthen local government input on this key public issue. I have enclosed details of the Coalition, its membership and aims. Brighton's Manager Development Services, James Dryburgh (phone 6268 7038) would be happy to provide further advice to your Council if required.

I look forward to your consideration of membership and to discussing this further with you.

Yours sincerely

Tony Foster AM OAM JP
MAYOR

8th January 2016

Terms of Reference for coalition of community organisations concerned about gambling

1. The coalition

The coalition was formed on 2 November 2015 by non-government organisations who were concerned about gambling and in particular the effects of poker machines in Tasmania. **The coalition's Statement on Public Policy Principles and Recommendations released on 2 November forms the basis for the coalition's work together and for its public statements.**

The coalition exists to ensure the Tasmanian Government consults with the community on the future of gambling in Tasmania, including the number and location of poker machines, the number of casinos and the level of consumer protection required by the State.

The coalition has no legal status. The responsibility for content in public statements will be borne by the members listed as a supporter at that time.

2. Coordination and decision making of the coalition

Anglicare will facilitate coordination of the coalition. Most communications will be via email, which will provide proposals with a minimum of 1 week permitted for comments. Members are required to clearly articulate agreement, approval or objections as relevant. After the time for comments has passed, Anglicare will assume any organisation that has not commented has agreed to the proposal.

3. Membership of the coalition

The coalition consists of fixed membership with a defined list of organisations. New members will be considered where they can demonstrate:

- Support and commitment for the coalition's objectives as outlined in the 2 November 2015 Statement and any subsequent statements authorised by the coalition; and
- An intention to actively participate in the coalition including the ability to contribute to meetings and discussions and consult their organisation's management where necessary and in a timely manner.

Political parties, politicians, individuals and lobby groups that do not provide services to the Tasmanian community or to Tasmanian community groups will not be accepted as members.

A minimum of 1 week will be given for existing members to share their approval or objections of any proposal for membership. All members of the coalition, current at the time of the application, must be in favour of new member applications for the application to be successful. If approved, the new member will be added to the contact list and any public statement issued thereafter.

4. Media, campaigns and activities

Media, campaign and activities that are conducted independently by member groups themselves must be under that member group's name only. **Media, campaign and activities that bear the name of the coalition must be approved by the coalition.** The coalition may appoint spokespersons who can speak on pre-agreed positions without further consultation.



Coalition of community organisations concerned about gambling

Statement on Public Policy Principles and Recommendations

2 November 2015

A coalition of community sector organisations has formed today to express its concerns about gambling and to call on the Tasmanian Government to consult with the community on the future of gambling in Tasmania, including the number and location of poker machines, the number of casinos and the level of consumer protection required by the State.

The current Deed that sets out the conditions of the monopoly license for the casinos and poker machines in Tasmania is due to expire on 18 March 2018. It has the option of a further rolling term of five years. During recent discussions about a possible third casino, the Treasurer promised public consultation before any proposal is presented to Parliament.

The community sector coalition has a number of public policy principles it proposes should form the basis of negotiations about gambling:

1. Gambling problems are a public health issue that should be treated in the same way as other public health issues. This would see a public policy framework that prioritises prevention of harm across the whole population through effective consumer protection measures.
2. Parliament should use the data from Tasmania's three Social and Economic Impacts Studies (SEIS) to guide its public policy approach on gambling.
3. Public policy on gambling should recognise that higher gambling frequency is an indicator for developing gambling problems and should therefore address both the risk factors that lead people to gamble more frequently and the gambling features that are attractive to people who subsequently develop a gambling problem.
4. Public policy on poker machines should recognise that 98 per cent of the adult population either never touch a poker machine or spend less than 12 hours per year at a machine. Public policy should therefore focus on the people who face harm because of their intensified daily or weekly visits to the machines.

Policy recommendations

With the above public policy principles in mind, the coalition of community organisations makes a number of policy recommendations to the State Government. These are evidence-based recommendations drawn from the real-life experience provided by clients of Gamblers Help and the data collected by the three Tasmanian Social and Economic Impact Studies (SEIS). They recognise the \$200 million that is lost into poker machines across Tasmanian communities every year that, according to the Productivity Commission, is money that would or could have been spent on other industries such as food and housing. These recommendations also recognise that problems with gambling do not only affect an individual, but also leads to negative impacts on families, including children.

The coalition recommends that Parliament introduce the following measures on the expiration or renegotiation of the current Deed between Federal Hotels and the State of Tasmania:

1. All poker machines in Tasmania required to have a system that allows people to set an enforceable limit on their losses;
2. Volatility of all poker machines in Tasmania be reduced by setting the maximum bet limit to \$1, decreasing the jackpot amounts and frequencies and increasing the amount of time between each button push;
3. That it be a requirement of their gambling licence that venues identify people exhibiting gambling problems and intervene appropriately;
4. All poker machines in Tasmania to contribute at the same rate to the Community Support Levy; and
5. Poker machines be phased out of hotels and clubs in Tasmania.

Members of the coalition:

Anglicare Tasmania
CatholicCare
Hobart City Mission
Launceston Benevolent Society
Launceston City Mission
Mission Australia
Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania
Relationships Australia
Scripture Union of Tasmania
St. Vincent de Paul Society
Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Uniting Church in Australia
Tasmanian Baptist Churches
Tascoss
The Salvation Army
UnitingCare Tasmania

For more details about this statement please email Margie Law on m.law@anglicare-tas.org.au



Friday 11 December 2015

RE: The negative impacts of poker machines in Tasmania

Dear The Hon Peter Gutwein MP,

A coalition of sixteen community organisations formed in November this year to urge the Tasmanian Government to consult with the community on the future of gambling in Tasmania, including the number and location of poker machines, the number of casinos and the level of consumer protection required by the State.

The current Deed that sets out the conditions of the monopoly license for the casinos and poker machines in Tasmania is due to expire on 30 June 2018. It then moves into the rolling term of five-year periods. During recent discussions about a possible third casino, the Treasurer promised public consultation before any proposal on renewing the license on poker machines is presented to Parliament.

The Tasmanian community is concerned that poker machines cause significant harm. Polling of 1000 adults conducted by EMRS in November this year found that 84 per cent of respondents disagree that the Tasmanian community benefits from having poker machines in hotels and clubs, 66 per cent of whom strongly disagreed. Further, 82 per cent of respondents want fewer poker machines in their communities: 32 per cent of respondents want a reduction in numbers while a further 50 per cent said that poker machines should be removed completely.

Given the strong community concern about the harm caused by poker machines, we call on you to publicly state your support for extensive community consultation before any agreement to extend or renew the poker machine license.

Our coalition has a number of public policy principles it proposes should form the basis of negotiations about the future of poker machines in Tasmania:

1. Gambling problems are a public health issue that should be treated in the same way as other public health issues. This would see a public policy framework that prioritises prevention of harm across the whole population through effective consumer protection measures.
2. Parliament should use the data from Tasmania's three Social and Economic Impacts Studies (SEIS) to guide its public policy approach on gambling.

3. Public policy on gambling should recognise that higher gambling frequency is an indicator for developing gambling problems and should therefore address both the risk factors that lead people to gamble more frequently and the gambling features that are attractive to people who subsequently develop a gambling problem.
4. Public policy on poker machines should recognise that 98 per cent of the adult population either never touch a poker machine or spend less than 12 hours per year at a machine. Public policy should therefore focus on the people who face harm because of their intensified daily or weekly visits to the machines.

Since the formation of the coalition, the final volume of the Third Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania (SEIS) was released. This volume provides an analysis based on the subjective views of consumers and stakeholders about the harm minimisation measures that have been introduced since the first SEIS in 2008 and in particular the Responsible Gambling Mandatory Code of Practice for Tasmania.

The Productivity Commission explained in 2010 that in order for harm minimisation measures to be effective, there needs to be a significant decrease in expenditure on gambling because of the large proportion of expenditure obtained from people with a gambling problem. Figure 1 (attached) shows that expenditure on gambling on poker machines in hotels and clubs has only decreased by \$5.8 million since the first harm minimisation measure was introduced on 1st April 2010 (the \$5 bet limit and reduction in maximum betting lines for new games). This is less than a 5% decrease. This small decrease in expenditure comes at the same time that the State had experienced a difficult financial situation, with general retail expenditure also being reduced during this period.

Over the three month summer Parliamentary recess, a further \$50 million dollars will be lost by Tasmanians in their local hotels and clubs. Our coalition is eager to meet with you in the New Year to seek your support in reducing the harmful impacts that the loss of much of this money to poker machines has on families and communities. We all have a responsibility to act in the interests of public health in Tasmania and the expiration of the Deed between the Crown and Federal Hotels on 30 June 2018 offers us a significant opportunity to make meaningful positive changes.

Yours sincerely on behalf of the coalition of community organisations concerned about gambling,

Chris Jones, CEO, Anglicare
Tony Foster, Mayor, Brighton Council
Georgina McGlagan, Director Family Services, CatholicCare
John Stubley, CEO, Hobart City Mission
John Stuart, CEO, Launceston Benevolent Society
Stephen Brown, CEO, Launceston City Mission
Noel Mundy, State Director, Mission Australia
John Hooper, Executive Officer, Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania
Mat Rowell, CEO, Relationships Australia
Ruth Pinkerton, CEO, SU Tasmania
Bernard Saunders, State Secretary, St. Vincent de Paul Society
Carol Bennett, Synod Liaison Minister (Tas), Uniting Church in Tasmania
Eric Lockett, Public Questions Officer, Tasmanian Baptist Churches
Kym Goodes, CEO, TasCOSS
Stuart Foster, Social Program Secretary, The Salvation Army
Lindy O'Neill, CEO UnitingCare Tasmania

Figure 1: Introduction of harm minimisation measures and losses to poker machines in hotels and clubs 1995/96 to 2014/15



