

THE POKIES PLAY YOU

Government ploughs ahead with disastrous pokies licence renewal

Thursday, November 30, 2017

The Alliance for Gambling Reform is dismayed with the Andrews Government for ignoring calls to delay its pokies legislation and instead ploughing ahead in the upper house today.

The Gambling Regulation Amendment (Gaming Machine Arrangements) Bill 2017 has been listed 2nd on the [notice paper](#) to be debated in the Legislative Council today, suggesting the government is confident it can rush the legislation through in the last sitting days before Christmas with the support of the Opposition.

Alliance director and spokesman Tim Costello had previously written to the Government and Opposition leadership requesting that they not be involved in any pre-Christmas law-making in the final sitting days of the year when the new 20 year pokies entitlements won't commence until August 2022.

See [Tim Costello letter to Gaming Minister Marlene Kairouz](#).

“Having been ignored by the government, I now call on Matthew Guy, Tim McCurdy, Peter Walsh, Mary Wooldridge and all fair-minded Coalition MPs not to let the Government sneak this through,” Mr Costello said.

“When you are talking about \$70 billion of pokies losses over the next 25 years in the world's biggest gambling nation, the community should be properly informed and the bill should be substantially amended.”

“I welcome the proposed amendments suggested by both Colleen Hartland and Fiona Patten, but the Coalition remains the key to reducing enormous poker machine harm. All MPs should read Fiona Patten's [sensible opinion piece](#) in the *Herald Sun* today and then push the pause button.”

The Alliance has [outlined its detailed concerns](#) about the legislation and believes a number of amendments need to be pursued, including:

1. A ban on cashless gambling.
2. A reduction in the amount of cash that can be withdrawn in venues to \$200 per day
3. An increase in the minimum closing period for venues from 4 hours to 10 hours
4. Maintain the 50/50 split in EGM numbers between clubs and hotels
5. Lower maximum bets from \$5 to \$1
6. Maintain the existing licence term at 10 years

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