

THE POKIES PLAY YOU

Collingwood kicks the biggest goal yet in pokies divestment campaign

Tuesday, July 17, 2018

The Alliance for Gambling Reform today congratulated Collingwood Football Club for decisively [exiting the toxic pokies industry](#) and called on the remaining AFL clubs to quickly follow suit.

Alliance director and spokesman Tim Costello said President Eddie McGuire and all the [Collingwood directors](#) have sent a powerful message to the community that they no longer wish to be associated with a product which is designed to addict and causes enormous harm in the community.

“Collingwood was third on the [pokies league ladder](#) with gamblers losing \$12.24 million at their two venues in 2016-17 so this is the biggest pokies divestment in the unfortunate history of AFL clubs ripping more than \$2 billion from gamblers over the past 25 years,” Mr Costello said.

“Well done Eddie, you are trail-blazer who is looking after the battlers and leading by example.”

Mr Costello said the focus will now quickly shift to his beloved Essendon Football Club to withdraw its proposal for a new 24 year pokies venue lease at the Melton Country Club, which is due for decision at City of Melton as early as next Monday night. (see recent Alliance [newsletter](#) plus [reports in The Age](#).)

Mr Costello also congratulated City of Melbourne for contributing to the Collingwood exit by [writing to clubs and pubs](#) encouraging divestment and also [inserting provisions](#) in a \$300,000 a year access arrangement at the Holden Centre which gave Collingwood a financial incentive to exit.

“City of Melbourne has shown the local government sector can be the engine room of pokies reform given the dominance of the industry over the major political parties and the addiction of state governments to the \$6 billion in revenue they make from pokies each year,” Mr Costello said.

“As councils and AFL clubs show the way, eventually the most irresponsible operators in Victoria’s pokies market – the State Government and Woolworths – will bow to community demands and follow suit.”

Earlier today, The Alliance revealed that the State Government has quietly approved an end to the long-standing 50-50 pokies split between pubs and clubs, a move that will contribute to an additional tens of millions a year being lost by gamblers when it comes into effect in August 2022.

See [full media statement](#) on that issue.

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