

Northern Beaches Councillors vote for strong action on pokies

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

The Alliance for Gambling Reform today congratulated Northern Beaches Council for adopting a strong pokies harm minimisation plan, joining Fairfield as only the second NSW council with a formal gambling policy.

Despite a ferocious lobbying campaign by the pokies industry, co-ordinated by Clubs NSW, councillors voted 8-6 to adopt the plan last night after an earlier deferral motion was defeated with the Acting mayor Candy Bingham using her casting vote. (See [coverage in SMH](#)).

Alliance director and spokesman Tim Costello said the policy was a big step forward and a model plan for councils across NSW, even though the proposal to review pokies venues on council land was removed as a compromise.

“This is a great outcome pushed by elected representatives from across the political divide but anyone who claims that NSW local government should stay out of the gambling debate forgets that councils are the biggest landlords of pokies venues in NSW,” Mr Costello said.

“The scaremongering about pokies clubs going broke without permissive long term pepper corn leases from councils just confirms how exploitative and intransigent the pokies industry is when it comes to reform of the world’s most densely saturated pokies market.”

The Northern Beaches policy push was jointly led by veteran Liberal councillor Pat Daley and the sole Northern Beaches Green, Cr Natalie Warren, but the final vote saw the other 4 Liberal councillors all vote against. Labor has no councillors at Northern Beaches.

Mr Costello called on more Liberal councillors, MPs and elected representatives at all levels from the major parties to follow the lead of Pat Daley and get behind gambling reform.

“The NSW Coalition Government has capitulated to the gambling industry for the past 8 years and now is the time for Premier Gladys Berejiklian to promise she won’t sign another 4 year Memorandum of Understanding with Clubs NSW,” Mr Costello said. “Labor also needs to avoid making any election commitments to the NSW pokies industry.”

Northern Beaches has a majority of independent councillors and the Alliance believes the Northern Beaches *Gambling and Poker Machine Harm Management Policy and Plan* will set a benchmark for other NSW councils to follow because it:

Supports reform measures previously recommended by either the Productivity Commission or the 2014 NSW Parliamentary Committee, such as \$1 maximum bets and reduced trading hours;

Acknowledges poker machines “are designed to maximise spending and machine usage and are highly addictive”.

Supports using the Northern Beaches Council website to clearly articulate the harms of gambling and services available to mitigate these harms.

Endorses exploring the possibility of banning gambling advertising on council buildings and through council sponsorship programs.

The development of the plan coincided with the [tragic death of Gary Van Duinen](#) after being ensnared by the predatory tactics of the poker machine industry, primarily at the Dee Why RSL, the [largest pokies venues](#) on the Northern Beaches.

Gary's mother Joy Van Duinen addressed the Northern Beaches meeting last night calling on councillors to take action given the widespread devastation caused by addictive poker machines. Listen to her words [here](#).

"The Alliance salutes Joy Van Duinen for bravely campaigning for long overdue reform in memory of her son, whose life was ruined by an addictive product which is more available in NSW than any other jurisdiction in the world," Mr Costello said.

Background documents

[Originating motion](#) from November 2017 submitted jointly by Cr Pat Daley & Cr Natalie Warren.

[24 page draft "Gambling & Poker Machine Harm Management Strategy"](#) sent for consultation in April 2018.

Last night's debate - see from [p113 of the September 25 agenda](#) for a summary of the response to submissions and the full policy and plan starting on [p147 of this document](#).

How the councillors voted

The original Nov 2017 motion passed 10-3 with the 15 [Northern Beaches councillors](#) voting as follows:

For: Pat Daley (Lib), Natalie Warren (Greens), Roslyn Harrison (Your Northern Beaches), Stuart Sprott (Lib), Candy Bingham (Good For Manly) Deputy Mayor, Rory Amon (Lib), Sue Heins (Your Northern Beaches), Vincent de Luca (Ind), Kylie Ferguson (Lib), Alex McTaggart (Ind).

Against: David Walton (Lib), Penny Philpott (Your Northern Beaches), Ian White (Your Northern Beaches)

Abstain/conflicted: Mayor Michael Regan (Your Northern Beaches) declared a conflict and Sarah Grattan (Your Northern Beaches) abstained.

How the councillors voted at the September 25, 2018, council meeting:

For: Pat Daley (Lib), Natalie Warren (Greens), Roslyn Harrison (YNB), Candy Bingham (Good For Manly) Deputy Mayor, Sue Heins (YNB), Vincent de Luca (Ind), Ian White (Your Northern Beaches).

Against: David Walton (Lib), Penny Philpott (Your Northern Beaches), Stuart Sprott (Lib), Alex McTaggart (Ind), Kylie Ferguson (Lib), Rory Amon (Lib).

Absent: Mayor Micheal Regan (Your Northern Beaches) declared a conflict.

Media contacts: Kate da Costa: 0419 481 328 - kate@agr.org.au

Stephen Mayne: 0412 106 241 – stephen@agr.org.au