

THE POKIES PLAY YOU

August pokies losses soar to second worst month on record in Victoria

Tuesday, October 2, 2018

Victorians lost a record \$246.2 million on the pokies in August 2018, a 5.3% increase on the losses in August 2017, continuing a disturbing trend since the Victorian Parliament legislated for new 20 year pokies licences late last year.

The new data, [released by the VCGLR](#) yesterday, shows that Victoria is headed for record pokies losses in 2018 with losses now up \$93.4 million or 5.4% to a record \$1.81 billion for the first 8 months of the calendar year.

The \$246.2 million lost in August 2018 was the second worst monthly loss ever, beaten only by the \$250.016 million lost in December 2008 after the cash stimulus payments during the global financial crisis.

Using rolling 12 monthly data, Victorians lost a record \$2716 million in the year to August 31, but the calendar year figure is likely to finish close to \$2.8 billion if the current trend continues given average monthly increases of 5.4% this year compared with no increases in calendar 2017 until the legislation was passed in November 2017.

Alliance for Gambling Reform director and spokesman Tim Costello said the deteriorating losses highlighted the need for all sides of politics to make serious election commitments to reduce Victoria's world record levels of gambling harm.

"Daniel Andrews and Matthew Guy should be ashamed of themselves for working together to increase losses at a time when the community is calling for political leaders to tackle Australia's world record levels of gambling losses," Mr Costello said.

"It is not too late for either political party to commit to reforms such as \$1 maximum bets, reduced operating hours and less addictive machine design."

Monthly losses	2017 (\$m)	2018	Numeric Change	Per cent Change
Jan	\$209.4	\$221.7	\$12.3m	5.9
Feb	\$193.6	\$203.5	\$9.9m	5.1
Mar	\$213.2	\$227.3	\$14.1m	6.6
April	\$210.5	\$220.5	\$9.9m	4.7
May	\$212.4	\$227.2	\$14.8m	7.0
June	\$212.2	\$223.3	\$11.1m	5.2
July	\$230.1	\$239.0	\$8.9m	3.9
August	\$233.9	\$246.2	\$12.3m	5.3
Year to date	\$1,715.2	\$1,808.7	\$93.4m	5.4

Thanks to last year's legislation, Victorians suffered the biggest jump in pokies losses for a decade in 2017-18, as was outlined in this [media statement](#) by The Alliance last month.

In terms of the latest figures for the month of August, the councils which suffered the biggest increases included:

Geelong: up almost 10% in August 2018 alone, recording the second highest highly monthly losses ever of \$10.98 million, only surpassed by the \$11.33 million lost in December 2008 after the Rudd Government stimulus payments. See [report](#) in *Geelong Advertiser*.

Brimbank: one of only two council areas to record a single month increase in losses of more than \$1 million. After \$12.27 million was lost in August 2017, this jumped \$1.03 million or 8.4% to \$13.3 million in August 2018, which is believed to be an all-time monthly high.

Casey: suffered the biggest nominal increase with losses jumping from \$11.46 million in August 2017 to a record \$12.64 million in August 2018, a gain of 10.3%.

Melbourne: has moved into the top ten for losses for the first time after a big jump in losses from \$7.2 million in August 2017, to a record \$8.012 million in August 2018. These losses exclude Crown Melbourne, where gamblers lost \$450 million on its pokies in 2017-18.

Mr Costello said The Alliance is particularly disappointed that Gaming Minister Marlene Kairouz has agreed to speak at an upcoming [pokies industry conference](#) being held at a pokies venue, the Deer Park Club (\$11.5m in pokies losses in 2017-18), in the City of Brimbank on October 16.

"Brimbank suffers the highest per capita losses of any council in Victoria and the Minister is meant to represent this part of Melbourne's western suburbs in her seat of Koroit," Mr Costello said.

"It would be far more appropriate for the Minister to meet with people harmed by gambling rather than the industry which has received far too much favourable treatment from this Government given the enormous harm it causes."

"The Alliance is calling on the Minister to withdraw from the pokies industry conference and instead spend the time meeting with officers and councillors from City of Brimbank to discuss how record pokies losses in Brimbank can be reduced."

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