

## NSW sets new record for pokies losses at \$18.7m per day

Thursday, May 23, 2019

Poker machine gamblers in NSW lost a staggering record amount of \$18.7 million per day (\$779,000 per hour) in 2018, according to [figures released yesterday](#) by the NSW Government.

Alliance for Gambling Reform director and spokesman Tim Costello said the overall 2018 NSW pokies losses of \$6.815 billion were a shocking indictment on NSW with its weak regulations, enormous machine numbers and the most dangerously addictive pokies in Australia.

“The NSW Government should not be standing idly by as \$779,000 an hour was lost on 93,165 pokies across NSW in 2018,” Mr Costello said. “This is a social disaster needing urgent action.”

The growth in losses was driven by the aggressive for-profit pubs sector which drained a record \$2.5 billion from poker machines gamblers in NSW pubs in 2018, a jump of \$161 million or 6.9%.

The Alliance believes the [latest 6 monthly data](#) released yesterday by the Department of Liquor and Gambling confirm that the [2018 legislative changes](#) failed to curb world record levels of gambling loss and harm in NSW.

Whilst there was a reduction of about 400 machines in NSW clubs since 2017, the total losses on the 69,014 club pokies still rose by \$22 million to a record \$3.968 billion in 2018.

Overall, losses across the 2514 NSW pokies clubs and pubs jumped from \$6.28 billion in 2017 to a record \$6.463 billion in 2018, a gain of \$183 million or 2.91%.

When combined with the record \$352 million lost on the 1500 pokies at The Star Casino in 2018, total NSW pokies losses hit a record \$6.815 billion in 2018, confirming the state as the gambling capital of the world in terms of per capita losses.

The Alliance also called on the NSW Government to improve disclosure by revealing losses suffered at individual pub and club venues, rather than just releasing a ranking.

The [clubs league ladder](#) shows that Mounties in City of Fairfield remains the state’s most lucrative pokies club in the latest six months, although Doolies Lidcombe Catholic Club has moved up from third to second, replacing the Bankstown Sports Club.

“If the Victorians can [reveal venue level losses](#) on a six monthly basis then NSW should do the same rather than this bizarre system of ranking clubs and pubs without revealing actual figures,” Mr Costello said.

“The NRL doesn’t reveal a league ladder without showing the specific wins and losses incurred by clubs and the same should apply with the 2514 pubs and clubs which have pokies in NSW.”

The figures reveal that pokies-saturated City of Sydney is the only individual council area in NSW where pokies losses at pubs exceed clubs. The 172 pokies pubs in City of Sydney extracted a record \$293 million from gamblers on their 3140 poker machines in 2018, up from \$286 million in 2017. By way of contrast, City of Melbourne only has 7 pokies pubs.

In terms of local government areas, the City of Canterbury Bankstown was again the hardest hit, suffering a record \$566 million in losses in 2018, with the 31 pubs contributing \$211 million and the 34 clubs taking \$355 million from the community from their 4110 machines.

Fairfield City Council once again had the highest per capita losses as a staggering \$513.8 million was lost in 2018 on the 3863 machines operating at 38 pubs and clubs. This compares with \$484.7 million of losses in 2016-17 and Fairfield City Council's total rates revenue of \$109 million in 2017-18.

"There is no other council area in Australia like Fairfield where the community is spending almost 5 times as much on pokies as they pay in rates to their local council," Mr Costello said.

"This demonstrates how out of control poker machines losses are in NSW, particularly in the more vulnerable communities of south western Sydney."

Mr Costello called on the newly appointed NSW Gambling Minister Victor Dominello to seize the initiative and embrace reforms such as \$1 maximum bets, reduced trading hours and a ban on loyalty programs, particularly in the fast-growing for-profit pubs sector.

"The NSW Coalition should never have signed another [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with Clubs NSW which will lock in almost \$30 billion in pokies losses over the life of this Parliament unless decisive and long overdue action is taken."

#### **LINKS AND BACKGROUND**

[2018 poker machine MOU between Clubs NSW and NSW Coalition](#)

[Hotel pokies losses by LGA in 6 months to December 31, 2018](#), showing losses of \$1.326 billion from 22,651 machines at 1420 hotel venues and a tax rate of 34.37%.

[Club pokies losses by LGA in 6 months to November 30, 2018](#), showing losses of \$2.024 billion from 69,014 machines at 1094 venues and a tax rate of just 19.8%.

[Rankings of NSW hotels](#) for largest gambling losses December 2018 half year.

[Ranking of NSW clubs](#) for largest gambling losses in 6 months to November 30, 2018

Media contacts: Kate da Costa: 0419 481 328 - [kate@agr.org.au](mailto:kate@agr.org.au)

Stephen Mayne: 0412 106 241 – [stephen@agr.org.au](mailto:stephen@agr.org.au)