

# THE POKIES PLAY YOU

**As politicians fail to act, time to put the pokies on trial in court**

Monday, September 11, 2017

Poker machines manufacturers, operators and regulators across Australian should sit up and pay attention to a landmark Federal Court trial against gambling giants Crown Resorts and Aristocrat Leisure which start tomorrow, The Alliance for Gambling Reform said today.

Alliance director and spokesman Tim Costello said the case could have profound implications on the operation of “Australian-style pokies”, which have long been globally known in the gambling industry to be uniquely dangerous and addictive.

The Alliance is calling for pokies regulators and operators to pause for the trial and be ready to remove Aristocrat’s Dolphin Treasurer machines from venues across Australia, if the court finds they have misleading and deceptive features such as rigged reels, losses disguised as wins or over-stated player returns.

“The Victorian Government will shortly introduce legislation determining the operation of pokies in Victoria until 2042,” Mr Costello said. “The Victorians, and all Australian states and territories with poker machines, should not make any more pro-industry decisions until after the landmark 3 week trial brought by law firm Maurice Blackburn on behalf of the brave plaintiff Shonica Guy is completed.”

**Mr Costello, The Alliance’s NSW spokesperson Allison Keogh and other supporters of Shonica will be at the Federal Court from 9.15am tomorrow to speak with the media and wish her well in this epic David and Goliath battle against Aristocrat and Crown before Justice Deborah Mortimer.**

“Australia has strong consumer protection laws so putting dangerously addictive pokies on trial for misleading and deceptive conduct has given hope to everyone campaigning to wind back Australia’s tragic record of inflicting more gambling harm on its people than other country in the world,” Mr Costello said.

“The combination of pioneering social justice law firm Maurice Blackburn, Ron Merkel QC and three other barristers representing Shonica will give these gambling industry behemoths an unprecedented Federal Court grilling on behalf of Shonica, who suffered significant harm over 14 years like thousands of other victims.”

“Politicians have a duty or care to protect people from dangerous products like Aristocrat’s Dolphin Treasure poker machine. We do it well with guns, we do it well with tobacco, we do it on our roads. With bipartisan political failure on gambling regulation in Australia, now is the time to tackle this epidemic of harm and addiction through the courts.”

## **BACKGROUND AND MEDIA COVERAGE ON THE TRAIL BLAZING POKIES CASE**

See this [case explainer](#) from Maurice Blackburn including a nifty video.

[Former pokies addict takes on Crown and Aristocrat](#)

*The Sydney Morning Herald*, September 11, 2017

[Gambler “ripped off” by deceptive machines](#)

ABC News, October 26, 2016

[Crown and Aristocrat accused of misleading and deceptive conduct](#)

*The Age*, September 5, 2016

[Pokies payout a “myth”: landmark legal action](#)

*The Age*, October 26, 2016

## **COVERAGE ON AUSTRALIA’S INTERNATIONALLY NOTORIOUS GAMBLING EPIDEMIC**

[Why Australia has a serious gambling problem](#)

CNN, September 1, 2017

[Gambling disease kills one Australian a day](#)

Bloomberg, September 28, 2016

[Fairfield: ground zero of pokies harm in Australia](#)

*The Guardian*, July 29, 2017

## **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AUSTRALIA’S POKIES EPIDEMIC**

[Victorian lose another \\$2.61 billion on pokies in 2016-17](#)

Alliance media release, July 28, 2017

[NSW pokies losses continuing to soar as national losses top \\$12 billion](#)

Alliance media release, August 22, 2017

[Supermarket giant Woolworths now making 10% of profit from pokies pubs](#)

Alliance media release, August 25, 2017

[Victorian Government plan to increase dependency on pokies revenue](#)

Government announcements, July- August-September 2017

## **OTHER GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT GAMBLING LITIGATION & ENFORCEMENT**

[US Supreme Court considering New Jersey challenge to Federal ban on sport betting](#)

[Widening disputes between various Indian tribes and several large US states](#)

[Record \\$13m fine in UK against online operator 888 for “outrageous” breaches](#)

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