

THE POKIES PLAY YOU

TIME FOR POKIES GIANT WOOLWORTHS TO QUIT AHA

Sunday, March 11, 2017

The Alliance for Gambling Reform today called for pokies giant Woolworths to learn the lessons from Tasmania and cease funding the dishonest big spending scare campaign being run by the Australian Hotels Association in South Australia.

Alliance spokesman Tim Costello joined Shonica Guy and Nick Xenophon at the Woolworths supermarket in Newton in the seat of Hartley today to [hand out this flyer](#) and campaign for an end to big corporate gambling interests hiding behind industry peak bodies and manipulating election outcomes for their own end.

Mr Costello said the AHA and other gambling interests ran a deceitful [over the top campaign](#) in Tasmania and are now spending millions trying to repeat that formula in South Australia.

“Woolworths should be ashamed of the AHA pokies campaigns they are helping to finance and if they want to retain their ‘family friendly’ image they should sever all ties with the AHA and resign their membership,” Mr Costello said.

“When the [AHA recklessly claims](#) reforms will ‘decimate hotels across South Australia’, wiping out ‘many’ of the claimed 26,000 pub jobs, it is nothing short of reckless scaremongering funded by vested interests who want to cover up the enormous harm caused by the industry.”

The Alliance staff have again been in direct contact with Woolworths chairman Gordon Cairns this weekend but still we haven’t seen any move to rein in the renegade ALH pokies business which is 75% owned by Woolworths but managed out of Melbourne by the billionaire Mathieson family.

The Alliance explicitly requested Woolworths take action over its ALH division twice in February as follows:

February 16: [Alliance calls for Woolworths to overhaul ALH board](#)

February 28: [Wilkie bombshell: time for Woolworths to exit pokies business](#)

Shonica Guy, who recently took on Crown and pokies giant Aristocrat Leisure in the Federal Court, said she had been shocked by the volume of AHA ads across all media platforms, on the back of taxis and at various events.

“I’ve never seen a Woolworths pokies ad but this company which portray itself as the fresh food people are really just the pokies people with more than 12,000 pokies nationally and they are hiding behind the misleading claims being relentlessly pushed by the AHA,” Shonica said.

“The AHA ads hide the fact this predatory industry relies on a highly addictive and dangerous product which drains funds from people who should be spending more at their local super market.”

“When I was gambling on Woolworths poker machines I didn’t have any money left to spend at the super-market – it was all soaked up by their addictive poker machines.”

The Alliance noted that the South Australian division of the AHA has tried to present itself as representing small pub owners in South Australia when Woolworths’s ALH division is the largest pokies operator in the state with an interest in 990 SA machines across 28 venues where gamblers are losing about \$60 million per year or almost 10% of all pokies losses in the state.

And analysis by The Alliance reveals that the ALH [portfolio of hotels](#) in South Australia includes a disproportionate number which stay open the maximum 18 hours a day, are located in disadvantaged areas and have the maximum 40 machines available to hotels.

Examples of Woolworths SA pokies venues with maximum pokies and trading hours

[Aberfoyle Hub Tavern](#): 9am-3am – 40 machines

[Elizabeth Tavern](#): 10am-2am – 40 machines

[Enfield Hotel, Clearview](#): 9am-3am – 40 machines

[Eureka Tavern, Salsbury](#): 11am-5am – 40 machines

[Findon Hotel](#): 9am-3am – 40 machines

[Finsbury Hotel, Woodville North](#): 8am-2am – 40 machines

[Hendon Hotel](#): 9am-3am – 40 machines

[Links Hotel, Seaton](#): 8am-2am – 40 machines

[Norwood Hotel, Norwood](#): 11am-late – 40 machines

[Playford Tavern, Davoren Park](#): 10am-2am – 40 machines

[Rex Hotel, Marleston](#): 8am-2am – 40 machines

[Rose and Crown Hotel, Elizabeth](#): 8am-2am – 40 machines

[Slug ‘n Lettuce British Pub, Parafield Gardens](#): 8.30am-2.30am – 40 machines

[Victoria Hotel, O’Halloran Hill](#): 8am-2am – 40 machines

[Village Tavern](#): 9am-3am – 40 machines

“When the average South Australian pub or club only has about 22 poker machines, why is it that a majority of the Woolworths venues have the maximum 40 addictive machines?” Shonica Guy asked.

“And if Woolworths won’t keep their super-markets open 18 hours a day why do they expose the community to addictive poker machines all over the state in the middle of the night. It’s ruthless and its reckless.”

The Alliance is also calling for the AHA to fully disclose the size and scale of their record breaking multi-million dollar South Australian election spend before Saturday, including both donations and their own campaign.

“If you are going to try and buy an election for your own commercial interest, at least tell your members and the public how much you are prepared to pay,” Mr Costello said.

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