

THE POKIES PLAY YOU

Alliance welcomes passage of new online gambling tax in Victoria

Friday, September 21, 2018

The Alliance for Gambling Reform today welcomed the passage of the new online gambling tax by the Victorian upper house on the last sitting day of the term last night.

The tax, pitched at 8% of the gambling losses by Victorian with the largely foreign-owned bookmakers licenced in the Northern Territory, will raise \$48 million a year, with the government keeping \$30 million and \$18 million being redirected to the racing industry.

After the Government initially released a [Legislative Council notice paper](#) for Tuesday which dumped the legislation to number 9 on a long list of bills set to lapse, by Wednesday it had lifted it up the priority list to number 2 for the week and the debate started at 3.05pm yesterday afternoon.

Finally, at 8.55pm last night, the Gambling Regulation Amendment (Wagering and Betting) Bill 2018 was passed without dissent and unamended from the version first presented to the lower house on August 8.

The Alliance wrote to all Victorian MPs last Friday urging them to get this uncontroversial legislation through the Parliament so Victoria doesn't jeopardise a national rollout and the \$30 million a year tax on foreign bookmakers can commence on January 1, 2019, as promised. This has now happened.

Alliance director and spokesman Tim Costello thanked the Andrews Government for changing its mind and prioritising the taxing of foreign bookmakers such Sportsbet, Beteasy and Ladbrokes, which are owned by multinational gambling giants collectively worth almost \$30 billion.

Mr Costello said the focus would now move to other jurisdictions, including the yet to be passed NSW legislation ahead of what is also intended to be a January 1 2019 start date.

"Congratulations to the Victorian Labor, Liberal and National parties for working together to get this passed in a Bipartisan manner," Mr Costello said.

"The Alliance also appreciated the strong support from Greens leader Samantha Ratnam and cross-benchers such as Reason MP Fiona Patten, who both spoke strongly in the chamber yesterday about the need for wider gambling reform."

“As for the other jurisdictions, the Tasmanian Liberal Government deserves special attention because they are the only Australian state which has not proposed any point of consumption tax on foreign bookies.”

“The longer these gambling giants are left un-taxed, the more they will continue to deluge our kids with more than \$200 million a year in mainstream advertising.”

“It remains absolutely scandalous that the 24 licensed bookmakers and betting exchanges in the Northern Territory were only budgeted to pay a miserly \$5.4 million in taxes (see p80 of 2017-18 NT budget) to Territorians in 2017-18 when Australians are losing more than \$2 billion a year gambling with these companies.”

Background information

May 1 Alliance release after 2018 Victorian state budget made no mention of POCT.

May 14 release when Victorian version of the tax was announced.

September 18 release when it appeared likely the Victorian Government was ditching legislation.

Presentation (p18) from Sportsbet parent company Paddy Power Betefair summarising the timetable and tax rates proposed across Australia.

Second reading speech by Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas on August 8, 2018.

Shadow Treasurer Michael O’Brien’s speech in the Legislative Assembly (starts p2979) on August 22.

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