

THE POKIES PLAY YOU

Alliance welcomes National Consumer Protection Framework

Friday, November 30, 2018

The Alliance for Gambling Reform today welcomed the launch of Australia's first National Consumer Protection Framework for online gambling after an historic agreement between the Commonwealth and all eight state and territory governments.

Alliance CEO Tony Mohr, who attended the launch with Federal Families and Social Services Minister Paul Fletcher in Sydney this morning, said [the framework](#) contained a series of worthwhile reforms which will improve industry practice and, hopefully, reduce the world record levels of gambling harm in Australia.

"It is not easy getting nine governments to agree so we are delighted with the Federal Government for driving these reforms and securing agreement on 10 important consumer protection measures from all the other governments involved in gambling," Mr Mohr said.

"The Alliance regards the national self-exclusion register, moves to restrict debt-funded gambling and the crackdown on gambling inducements as the most important elements of the package and we look forward to seeing all the participating governments making legislative, regulatory and licence changes to implement the reforms in 2019."

"These reforms will mean hundreds of thousands of Australians will be safer from an aggressive gambling industry that is tearing lives apart and ruining Australian sports."

Whilst poker machines are easily Australia's biggest gambling category contributing almost \$14 billion of the record \$24 billion lost in 2017-18, online gambling is the fastest growing category with total wagering and sports gambling losses now running at more than \$4 billion a year and more than \$1.4 million of this being spent online.

Alliance director Mark Zirnsak, who represents the Victorian Inter-Church Gambling Taskforce, also attended today's launch and said he was pleased that agreement had been reached after a three year process which commenced in 2015 when then Social Services Minister Scott Morrison commissioned Barry O'Farrell to investigate online gambling.

The Alliance particularly notes that Alan Tudge MP has been a tireless advocate inside government for reforms to curb the harm inflicted on our communities by the online gambling industry after [one of his own constituents was targeted](#) with an \$80,000 loan from an online gambling corporation and almost lost his house.

“The online gambling corporations have demonstrated they cannot be trusted to act ethically by targeting, enticing and grooming people to lose more than they can afford,” Mr Zirnsak said.

“The inevitable result is families being ripped apart, people losing their homes to gambling debts and even suicides. The Commonwealth and State Governments need to implement these reforms as quickly as is possible to rein in this harm.”

“Foreign bookmakers have been competing ferociously with Tabcorp in recent years and have growth to the extent that this national framework will apply to 2.5 million active accounts operated by about 1 million Australians.”

The Alliance also notes this week’s evidence before the Banking Royal Commission from ANZ CEO Shayne Elliott flagging additional restrictions on credit card usage with gambling companies.

“Given that that the first two measures outlined in the principles both relate to restricting gambling companies from providing or promoting credit, surely it is time for Australia’s big banks to step up and cease the dubious practice of allowing customers to do expensive cash advance credit card payments directly into their online gambling accounts,” Mr Mohr said.

“If Sportsbet, Ladbrokes, Tabcorp, Beteasy and Bet365 are not allowed to lend money to Australian gamblers then why should our Big Four banks allow hundreds of millions of dollars to be lost each year on the credit cards they issue?”

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[Scott Morrison announces review by Barry O’Farrell](#) (see [terms of reference](#)) – Sept 7, 2015

[188 page O’Farrell review](#) – December 18, 2015

[Federal Government response to O’Farrell Review](#) – April 2016

[Alan Tudge secures national agreement for a Consumer Protection Code](#) – Nov 25, 2016

[National Consumer Protection Framework](#) finally launched - November 29, 2018

[Fact sheet on the new framework](#) – Nov 30, 2018

[Paul Fletcher interview with Sunrise announcing new framework](#) – Nov 30, 2018

[Minister’s press release on new framework](#) – Nov 30, 2018

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