

# THE POKIES PLAY YOU

## Victorians lose record \$2.73b on pokies in 2018 as venue losses revealed

Friday, January 25, 2019

Victorians lost a record \$2726 million on the pokies in 2018, a \$103 million or 3.9% increase on the \$2623 million lost in 2017, according to [figures released today](#) by the Victorian Commission for Liquor and Gambling Regulation (VCGLR).

The Alliance for Gambling Reform has calculated the 2018 calendar year losses after today's release of the December monthly data and [6 monthly venue loss data](#) and concluded that 2018 was \$58 million higher than the previous calendar year record of \$2668 million set in 2009.

Alliance for Gambling Reform director and spokesman Tim Costello said the record 2018 loss and the biggest annual increase in losses for more than a decade highlighted the need for all MPs in the newly elected Victorian Parliament to look at ways to reduce Australia's world record levels of gambling harm.

"It has now been 14 months since the Victorian Parliament passed legislation issuing new 20 year pokies licences and Victorians have suffered the biggest losses in history over that period," Mr Costello said. "The major parties should be ashamed of themselves for working together to increase losses at a time when the community is calling for political leaders to tackle Australia's world record levels of gambling losses.

"It is time for both of our major parties, and the expanding cross-bench in both houses, to commit to reforms such as \$1 maximum bets, reduced operating hours and less addictive machine design. No proudly progressive Government can sit back and legislate for increased losses in vulnerable suburbs given we now know how poker machines are deliberately designed to addict gamblers."

The 2018 calendar year record included the second worst monthly loss ever recorded when gamblers parted company with \$246.2 million in August alone. The worst month on record remains the \$250.016 million lost in December 2008 after the cash stimulus payments during the global financial crisis.

In terms of the 2018 calendar year losses, the council areas which suffered the biggest increases included:

**Brimbank:** the first Victorian council to crack \$140 million a year in losses, rising from \$134.87 million in 2017 to a record \$142.43 million in calendar 2018, a jump of 5.6% or \$7.56 million.

**Casey:** suffered one of the biggest nominal increases with losses jumping from \$127.7m in 2017 to a record \$134.17 million in 2018, a gain of 5% or \$6.47 million. Casey also had one of the fastest growing venues as the Berwick Springs Hotel lifted losses by \$1.95 million to a record \$19.89 million for the year, second only to the Epping Plaza Hotel in Whittlesea with \$20.18 million.

*Manningham*: has the highest proportion of Woolworths venues in Victoria and suffered a 7.3% jump in losses from \$55 million to \$59 million.

The full list of calendar year losses, comparing 2017 and 2018, by Victorian council area is [available here](#).

Below is a table showing the rise in Victorian monthly pokies losses over the past 2 calendar years along with a table of the 10 biggest pokies venues in Victoria for calendar 2018:

Monthly losses	2017 (\$m)	2018	Numeric Change	Per cent Change
Jan	\$209.4	\$221.7	\$12.3m	5.9
Feb	\$193.6	\$203.5	\$9.9m	5.1
Mar	\$213.2	\$227.3	\$14.1m	6.6
April	\$210.5	\$220.5	\$9.9m	4.7
May	\$212.4	\$227.2	\$14.8m	7.0
June	\$212.2	\$223.3	\$11.1m	5.2
July	\$230.1	\$239.0	\$8.9m	3.9
August	\$233.9	\$246.2	\$12.3m	5.3
September	\$224.7	\$229.4	\$4.7m	2.1
October	\$226.7	\$228.5	\$1.8m	0.8
November	\$222.3	\$228.9	\$6.6m	3.0
December	\$234.2	\$230.5	-\$3.7m	-1.6
Full calendar year	\$2,623.2	\$2726.0	\$102.8m	3.9%

## 10 worst Victorian pokies venues for gambler losses in 2018

VENUE	COUNCIL	OWNER	2017 LOSSES	2018 LOSSES	TRADING HOURS
Epping Plaza Hotel	Whittlesea	Alex Robertson	\$21.06m	\$20.18m	9am-5am
Berwick Springs Hotel	Casey	Zagames	\$18.03m	\$19.98m	9am-5am
Plough Hotel	Whittlesea	ALH/Woolies	\$18.98m	\$19.9m	9am-5am
Kealba Hotel	Brimbank	Melbourne Storm	\$16.21m	\$19.01m	9am-5am
Skyways Taverner	Moonee Valley	ALH/Woolies	\$16.58m	\$18.58m	8am-4am
Keysborough Hotel	Dandenong	ALH/Woolies	\$18.7m	\$18.32m	9am-5am
Bundoora Taverner	Whittlesea	ALH/Woolies	\$17.24m	\$17.82m	9am-5am
Gladstone Park Hotel	Hume	Hunter family	\$18.04m	\$17.56m	8am-4am
Rosstown Hotel	Glen Eira	Nikakis family	\$16.59m	\$17.1m	9am-5am
Dorset Gardens	Maroondah	Scerri family	\$16.37m	\$16.98m	10am-6am

[Click here](#) for a spreadsheet ranking the 10 biggest venues for losses in 2018 showing the percentage changes.

The Alliance is particularly disappointed that Australia's biggest pokies operator, ALH/Woolworths, appears to have increased its market share in 2018 and now accounts for almost \$700 million of Victoria's losses.

Mr Costello called on the supermarket giant to take immediate steps to reduce the harm and losses occurring at its 80 pokies venues across Victoria.

"Woolworths knows that operating 20 hours a day only serves to maximise harm and community losses so it is no surprise that the data released today reveals that it operates 4 of the 10 most lucrative Victorian venues, all of which are in safe Labor seats," Mr Costello said.

The Alliance is calling on Woolworths to disclose the annual losses incurred by gamblers at its 12,000 poker machines in 300 venues across Australia, something Crown Resorts did for the first time last year.

"If it is good enough for the Victorian Government to disclose the individual losses incurred at all 500 Victorian pokies venues and Crown Resorts reveals its pokies revenue in Melbourne and Perth, then Woolworths should come clean on just how much it is taking from pokies gamblers on a national basis," Mr Costello said.

"Gamblers also deserve to be told by the NSW and Queensland Government just how much is being lost each year at their pokies venues."

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